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THE CRUSADES.

EDWARD GIBBON.

SIEGE OF RHODES.

CAOURSIN—KAYE.

ESSAYS ON CHIVALRY, ROMANCE, &c.

SIR W. SCOTT, BART.



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THE CRUSADES.

SINCE the first conquests of the caliphs, the establishment of the Turks in Anatolia or Asia Minor was the most deplorable loss which the church and empire had sustained. By the propagation of the Moslem faith, Soliman the sultan, deserved the name of *Gazi*, a holy champion ; and his new kingdom of the Romans, or of *Roum*, was added to the tables of Oriental geography. It is described as extending from the Euphrates to Constantinople, from the Black Sea to the confines of Syria ; pregnant with mines of silver and iron, of alum and copper, fruitful in corn and wine, and productive of cattle and excellent horses. The wealth of Lydia, the arts of the Greeks, the splendour of the Augustan age, existed only in books and in ruins, which were equally obscure in the eyes of the Scythian conquerors. Yet in the present decay, Anatolia still contains *some* wealthy and populous cities ; and, under the Byzantine empire, they were far more flourishing in numbers, size, and opulence. By the choice of the sultan, Nice, the metropolis of Bithynia, was preferred for his palace and fortress : the seat of the Seljukian dynasty of Roum was planted 100 miles from Constantinople ; and the Divinity of Christ was denied and derided in the same temple in which it had been pronounced by the first general synod of the Catholics. The unity of God, and the mission of Mahomet, were preached from the mosques, the Arabian learning was taught in the schools ; the Cadis judged according to the law of the Koran : the Turkish manners and language prevailed in the cities ; and Turkman camps were scattered over the plains and mountains of Anatolia. On the hard conditions of tribute and servitude, the Greek Christians might enjoy the exercise of their religion ; but their most holy churches were profaned ; their priests and bishops were insulted : they were compelled to suffer the triumph of the *Pagans*, and the apostacy of their brethren ; many thousand children were marked by the knife of circumcision : and many thousand captives were devoted to the service or the pleasures of their masters. After the loss of Asia, Antioch still maintained her primitive allegiance to Christ and Cæsar ;

but the solitary province was separated from all Roman aid, and surrounded on all sides by the Mahometan powers. The despair of Philaretus the governor prepared the sacrifice of his religion and loyalty, had not his guilt been prevented by his son, who hastened to the Nicene palace, and offered to deliver this valuable prize into the hands of Soliman. The ambitious sultan mounted on horseback, and in twelve nights (for he reposed in the day) performed a march of six hundred miles. Antioch was oppressed by the speed and secrecy of his enterprise; and the dependant cities, as far as Laodicea, and the confines of Aleppo, obeyed the example of the metropolis. From Laodicea to the Thracian Bosphorus, or arm of St. George, the conquests and reign of Soliman extended thirty days' journey in length, and in breadth about ten or fifteen, between the rocks of Lycia and the Black Sea. The Turkish ignorance of navigation protected, for a while, the inglorious safety of the emperor; but no sooner had a fleet of two hundred ships been constructed by the hands of the captive Greeks, than Alexius trembled behind the walls of his capital. His plaintive epistles were dispersed over Europe, to excite the compassion of the Latins, and to paint the danger, the weakness, and the riches, of the city of Constantine.

But the most interesting conquest of the Seljukian Turks, was that of Jerusalem, which soon became the theatre of nations. In their capitulation with Omar, the inhabitants had stipulated the assurance of their religion and property; but the articles were interpreted by a master against whom it was dangerous to dispute; and in the four hundred years (A.D. 638—1099) of the reign of the caliphs, the political climate of Jerusalem was exposed to the vicissitudes of storms and sunshine. By the increase of proselytes and population, the Mahometans might excuse their usurpation of three-fourths of the city: but a peculiar quarter was reserved for the patriarch with his clergy and people; a tribute of two pieces of gold was the price of protection; and the sepulchre of Christ, with the church of the Resurrection, was still left in the hands of his votaries. Of these votaries, the most numerous and respectable portion were strangers to Jerusalem: the pilgrimages to the Holy Land had been stimulated, rather than suppressed, by the conquest of the Arabs; and the enthusiasm which had always prompted these perilous journeys, was nourished by the congenial passions of grief and indignation. A crowd of pilgrims from the East and West continued to visit the holy sepulchre, and the adjacent sanctuaries, more especially at the festival of Easter: and the Greeks and Latins, the Nestorians and Jacobites, the Copts and Abyssinians, the Armenians and Georgians, maintained the chapels, the clergy, and the poor of their respective communions. The harmony of prayer in so many various tongues, the worship of so many nations in the common temple of their religion, might have afforded a spec-

tacle of edification and peace ; but the zeal of the Christian sects was embittered by hatred and revenge ; and in the kingdom of a suffering Messiah, who had pardoned his enemies, they aspired to command and persecute their spiritual brethren. The pre-eminence was asserted by the spirit and number of the Franks ; and the greatness of Charlemagne protected both the Latin pilgrims and the Catholics of the East. The poverty of Carthage, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, was relieved by the alms of that pious emperor ; and many monasteries of Palestine were founded or restored by his liberal devotion. Harun Alrashid, the greatest of the Abassides, esteemed in his Christian brother a similar supremacy of genius and power : their friendship was cemented by a frequent intercourse of gifts and embassies ; and the caliph, without resigning the substantial dominion, presented the emperor with the keys of the holy sepulchre, and perhaps of the city of Jerusalem. In the decline of the Carlovingian monarchy, the republic of Amalphi promoted the interest of trade and religion in the East. Her vessels transported the Latin pilgrims to the coasts of Egypt and Palestine, and deserved, by their useful imports, the favour and alliance of the Fatimite caliphs : an annual fair was instituted on mount Calvary ; and the Italian merchants founded the convent and hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, the cradle of the monastic and military order which has since reigned in the isles of Rhodes and of Malta. Had the Christian pilgrims been content to revere the tomb of a prophet, the disciples of Mahomet, instead of blaming, would have imitated, their piety : but these rigid *Unitarians* were scandalised by a worship which represents the birth, death, and resurrection, of a God ; the Catholic images were branded with the name of idols ; and the Moslems smiled with indignation at the miraculous flame, which was kindled on the eve of Easter in the holy sepulchre. This pious fraud, first devised in the ninth century, was devoutly cherished by the Latin crusaders, and is annually repeated by the clergy of the Greek, Armenian, and Coptic sects, who impose on the credulous spectators for their own benefit, and that of their tyrants. In every age, a principle of toleration has been fortified by a sense of interest ; and the revenue of the prince and his emir was increased each year, by the expence and tribute of so many thousand strangers.

The revolution which transferred the sceptre (A.D. 969—1076) from the Abassides to the Fatimites was a benefit, rather than an injury, to the Holy Land. A sovereign resident in Egypt was more sensible of the importance of Christian trade ; and the emirs of Palestine were less remote from the justice and power of the throne. But the third of these Fatimite caliphs was the famous Hakem, a frantic youth, who was delivered by his impiety and despotism from the fear either of God or man ; and whose reign was a wild mixture of vice and folly. Regardless of the most ancient customs of Egypt, he imposed on the

women an absolute confinement : the restraint excited the clamours of both sexes ; their clamours provoked his fury ; a part of Old Cairo was delivered to the flames ; and the guards and citizens were engaged many days in a bloody conflict. At first the caliph declared himself a zealous Mussulman, the founder or benefactor of mosques and colleges : twelve hundred and ninety copies of the Koran were transcribed at his expence in letters of gold ; and his edict extirpated the vineyards of the Upper Egypt. But his vanity was soon flattered by the hope of introducing a new religion ; he aspired above the fame of a prophet and styled himself the visible image of the most high God, who, after nine apparitions on earth, was at length manifest in his royal person. At the name of Hakem, the lord of the living and the dead, every knee was bent in religious adoration : his mysteries were performed on a mountain near Cairo : sixteen thousand converts had signed his profession of faith ; and at the present hour, a free and warlike people, the Druses of Mount Libanus, are persuaded of the life and divinity of a madman and tyrant. In his divine character, Hakem hated the Jews and Christians, as the servants of his rivals : while some remains of prejudice or prudence still pleaded in favour of the law of Mahomet. Both in Egypt and Palestine, his cruel and wanton persecution made some martyrs and many apostates : the common rights and special privileges of the sectaries were equally disregarded ; and a general interdict was laid on the devotion of strangers and natives. The temple of the Christian world, the church of the Resurrection, was (A.D. 1009) demolished to its foundations ; the luminous prodigy of Easter was interrupted, and much profane labour was exhausted to destroy the cave in the rock which properly constitutes the holy sepulchre. At the report of this sacrilege, the nations of Europe were astonished and afflicted : but instead of arming in the defence of the Holy Land, they contented themselves with burning, or banishing, the Jews, as the secret advisers of the impious Barbarian. Yet the calamities of Jerusalem were in some measure alleviated by the inconstancy or repentance of Hakem himself ; and the royal mandate was sealed for the restitution of the churches, when the tyrant was assassinated by the emissaries of his sister. The succeeding caliphs resumed the maxims of religion and policy ; a free toleration was again granted ; with the pious aid of the emperor of Constantinople, the holy sepulchre arose from its ruins ; and, after a short abstinence, the pilgrims returned with an increase of appetite to the spiritual feast. In the sea-voyage of Palestine, the dangers were frequent, and the opportunities rare : but the conversion of Hungary opened a safe communication between Germany and Greece. The charity of St. Stephen, the apostle of his kingdom, relieved and conducted his itinerant brethren ; and from Belgrade to Antioch, they traversed 1500 miles of a Christian empire. Among the Franks, the zeal of pilgrimage prevailed (A.D.

1024, &c.) beyond the example of former times : and the roads were covered with multitudes of either sex, and of every rank, who professed their contempt of life, so soon as they should have kissed the tomb of their Redeemer. Princes and prelates abandoned the care of their dominions ; and the numbers of these pious caravans were a prelude to the armies which marched in the ensuing age under the banner of the cross. About thirty years before the first crusade, the archbishop of Mentz, with the bishops of Utrecht, Bamberg, and Ratisbon, undertook this laborious journey from the Rhine to the Jordan ; and the multitude of their followers amounted to 7000 persons. At Constantinople, they were hospitably entertained by the emperor ; but the ostentation of their wealth provoked the assault of the wild Arabs ; they drew their swords with scrupulous reluctance, and sustained a siege in the village of Capernaum, till they were rescued by the venal protection of the Fatimite emir. After visiting the holy places, they embarked for Italy, but only a remnant of 2000 arrived in safety in their native land. Ingulphus, a secretary of William the Conqueror, was a companion of this pilgrimage : he observes that they sallied from Normandy, thirty stout and well-appointed horsemen ; but that they repassed the Alps, twenty miserable palmers, with the staff in their hand, and the wallet at their back.

After the defeat of the Romans, the tranquillity of the Fatimite caliphs was invaded (A.D. 1076—1096) by the Turks. One of the lieutenants of Malek Shah, Atsiz the Carizmian, marched into Syria at the head of a powerful army, and reduced Damascus by famine and the sword. Hems, and the other cities of the province, acknowledged the caliph of Bagdad and the sultan of Persia : and the victorious emir advanced without resistance to the banks of the Nile : the Fatimite was preparing to fly into the heart of Africa ; but the negroes of his guard and the inhabitants of Cairo made a desperate sally, and repulsed the Turk from the confines of Egypt. In his retreat, he indulged the licence of slaughter and rapine : the judge and notaries of Jerusalem were invited to his camp ; and their execution was followed by the massacre of 3000 citizens. The cruelty or the defeat of Atsiz was soon punished by the sultan Toucush, the brother of Malek Shah, who, with a higher title and more formidable powers, asserted the dominion of Syria and Palestine. The house of Seljuk reigned about twenty years in Jerusalem ; but the hereditary command of the holy city and territory was entrusted or abandoned to the emir Ortok, the chief of a tribe of Turkmans, whose children, after their expulsion from Palestine, formed two dynasties on the borders of Armenia and Assyria. The Oriental Christians and the Latin pilgrims deplored a revolution, which, instead of the regular government and old alliance of the caliphs, imposed on their necks the iron yoke of the strangers of the north. In his court and camp the great sultan had adopted in some degree the arts and

manners of Persia ; but the body of the Turkish nation, and more especially the pastoral tribes, still breathed the fierceness of the desert. From Nice to Jerusalem, the western countries of Asia were a scene of foreign and domestic hostility : and the shepherds of Palestine, who held a precarious sway on a doubtful frontier, had neither leisure nor capacity to await the slow profits of commercial and religious freedom. The pilgrims who, through innumerable perils, had reached the gates of Jerusalem, were the victims of private rapine or public oppression, and often sunk under the pressure of famine and disease, before they were permitted to salute the holy sepulchre. A spirit of native barbarism, or recent zeal, prompted the Turkmen to insult the clergy of every sect : the patriarch was dragged by the hair along the pavement, and cast into a dungeon, to extort a ransom from the sympathy of his flock ; and the divine worship in the church of the resurrection was often disturbed by the savage rudeness of its masters. The pathetic tale excited the millions of the West to march under the standard of the cross to the relief of the holy land : and yet how trifling is the sum of these accumulated evils, if compared with the single act of the sacrifice of Hakem, which had been so patiently endured by the Latin Christians ! A slighter provocation inflamed the more irascible temper of their descendants : a new spirit had arisen of religious chivalry and papal dominion : a nerve was touched of exquisite feeling ; and the sensation vibrated to the heart of Europe.

About twenty years after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Turks (A.D. 1095—1099), the holy sepulchre was visited by an hermit of the name of Peter, a native of Amiens, in the province of Picardy in France. His resentment and sympathy were excited by his own injuries, and the oppression of the Christian name ; he mingled his tears with those of the patriarch, and earnestly inquired, if no hopes of relief could be entertained from the Greek emperors of the East. The patriarch exposed the vices and weakness of the successors of Constantine. " I will rouse," exclaimed the hermit, " the martial nations of Europe in your cause ;" and Europe was obedient to the call of the hermit. The astonished patriarch dismissed him with epistles of credit and complaint, and no sooner did he land at Bari, than Peter hastened to kiss the feet of the Roman pontiff. His stature was small, his appearance contemptible ; but his eye was keen and lively ; and he possessed that vehemence of speech, which seldom fails to impart the persuasion of the soul. He was born of a gentleman's family (for we must now adopt a modern idiom), and his military service was under the neighbouring counts of Boulogne, the heroes of the first crusade. But he soon relinquished the sword and the world ; and if it be true, that his wife, however noble, was aged and ugly, he might withdraw, with the less reluctance, from her bed to a convent, and at length to an hermitage. In this austere solitude, his body was emaciated, his

fancy was inflamed ; whatever he wished, he believed ; whatever he believed, he *saw* in dreams and revelations. From Jerusalem, the pilgrim returned an accomplished fanatic ; but as he excelled in the popular madness of the times, pope Urban the second received him as a prophet, applauded his glorious design, promised to support it in a general council, and encouraged him to proclaim the deliverance of the Holy Land. Invigorated by the approbation of the pontiff, this zealous missionary traversed, with speed and success, the provinces of Italy and France. His diet was abstemious, his prayers long and fervent, and the alms which he received with one hand, he distributed with the other : his head was bare, his feet naked, his meagre body was wrapt in a coarse garment ; he bore and displayed a weighty crucifix ; and the ass on which he rode, was sanctified in the public eye by the service of the man of God. He preached to innumerable crowds in the churches, the streets, and the highways : the hermit entered with equal confidence the palace and the cottage : and the people, for all were people, were impetuously moved by his call to repentance and arms. When he painted the sufferings of the natives and pilgrims of Palestine, every heart was melted to compassion ; every breast glowed with indignation, when he challenged the warriors of the age to defend their brethren and rescue their Saviour : his ignorance of art and language was compensated by sighs, and tears, and ejaculations ; and Peter supplied the deficiency of reason by loud and frequent appeals to Christ and his Mother, to the saints and angels of paradise, with whom he had personally conversed. The most perfect orator of Athens might have envied the success of his eloquence : the rustic enthusiast inspired the passions which he felt, and Christendom expected with impatience the counsels and decrees of the supreme pontiff.

The magnanimous spirit of Gregory the seventh had already embraced the design of arming Europe against Asia ; the ardour of his zeal and ambition still breathes in his epistles : from either side of the Alps, 50,000 Catholics had enlisted under the banner of St. Peter ; and his successor reveals *his* intention of marching at their head against the impious sectaries of Mahomet. But the glory or reproach of executing, though not in person, this holy enterprise, was reserved for the pope, Urban the second, the most faithful of his disciples. He undertook the conquest of the East, whilst the larger portion of Rome was possessed and fortified by his rival Guibert of Ravenna, who contended with Urban for the name and honours of the pontificate. He attempted to unite the powers of the West, at a time when the princes were separated from the church, and the people from their princes, by the excommunication which himself and his predecessors had thundered against the emperor and the king of France. Philip the first, of France, supported with patience the censures which

he had provoked by his scandalous life and adulterous marriage. Henry the fourth, of Germany, asserted the right of investitures, the prerogative of confirming his bishops by the delivery of the ring and crozier. But the emperor's party was crushed in Italy by the arms of the Normans and the countess Matilda; and the long quarrel had been recently envenomed by the revolt of his son Conrad and the shame of his wife. So popular was the cause of Urban, so weighty was his influence, that the council which he (A.D. 1095. March) summoned at Placentia was composed of 200 bishops of Italy, France, Burgundy, Swabia, and Bavaria. Four thousand of the clergy, and 30,000 of the laity, attended this important meeting: and as the most spacious cathedral would have been inadequate to the multitude, the session of seven days was held in a plain adjacent to the city. The ambassadors of the Greek emperor, Alexius Comnenus, were introduced to plead the distress of their sovereign and the danger of Constantinople, which was divided only by a narrow sea from the victorious Turks, the common enemies of the Christian name. In their suppliant address they flattered the pride of the Latin princes; and, appealing at once to their policy and religion, exhorted them to repel the Barbarians on the confines of Asia, rather than to expect them in the heart of Europe. At the sad tale of the misery and perils of their Eastern brethren the assembly burst into tears: the most eager champions declared their readiness to march; and the Greek ambassadors were dismissed with the assurance of a speedy and powerful succour. The relief of Constantinople was included in the larger and most distant project of the deliverance of Jerusalem; but the prudent Urban adjourned the final decision to a second synod, which he proposed to celebrate in some city of France in the autumn of the same year. The short delay would propagate the flame of enthusiasm; and his firmest hope was in a nation of soldiers still proud of the pre-eminence of their name, and ambitious to emulate their hero Charlemagne, who, in the popular romance of Turpin, had achieved the conquest of the Holy Land. A latent motive of affection or vanity might influence the choice of Urban: he was himself a native of France, a monk of Clugny, and the first of his countrymen who ascended the throne of St. Peter. The pope had illustrated his family and province; nor is there perhaps a more exquisite gratification than to revisit, in a conspicuous dignity, the humble and laborious scenes of our youth.

It may occasion some surprise that the Roman pontiff should erect, in the heart of France, the tribunal from whence he hurled his anathemas against the king. But our surprise will vanish so soon as we form a just estimate of a king of France of the eleventh century. Philip the first was the great-grandson of Hugh Capet the founder of the present race, who, in the decline of Charlemagne's posterity, added the regal title to his patrimonial estates of Paris and Orleans. In



this narrow compass, he was possessed of wealth and jurisdiction ; but in the rest of France, Hugh and his first descendants were no more than the feudal lords of about sixty dukes and counts, of independent and hereditary power, who disdained the control of laws and legal assemblies, and whose disregard of their sovereign was revenged by the disobedience of their inferior vassals. At Clermont, in the territories of the count of Auvergne, the pope might brave with impunity the resentment of Philip ; and the council which he convened (A.D. 1095. Nov.) in that city was not less numerous or respectable than the synod of Placentia. Besides his court and council of Roman cardinals, he was supported by 13 archbishops and 225 bishops ; the number of mitred prelates was computed at 400 ; and the fathers of the church were blessed by the saints, and enlightened by the doctors of the age. From the adjacent kingdoms, a martial train of lords and knights of power and renown, attended the council in high expectation of its resolves ; and such was the ardour of zeal and curiosity, that the city was filled, and many thousands, in the month of November, erected their tents or huts in the open field. A session of eight days produced some useful or edifying canons for the reformation of manners ; a severe censure was pronounced against the licence of private war ; the truce of God was confirmed, a suspension of hostilities during four days of the week ; women and priests were placed under the safeguard of the church ; and a protection of three years was extended to husbandmen and merchants, the defenceless victims of military rapine. But a law, however venerable be the sanction, cannot suddenly transform the temper of the times ; and the benevolent efforts of Urban deserve the less praise, since he laboured to appease some domestic quarrels that he might spread the flames of war from the Atlantic to the Euphrates. From the synod of Placentia, the rumour of his great design had gone forth among the nations : the clergy on their return had preached in every diocese the merit and glory of the deliverance of the Holy Land ; and when the pope ascended a lofty scaffold in the market-place of Clermont, his eloquence was addressed to a well-prepared and impatient audience. His topics were obvious, his exhortation was vehement, his success inevitable. The orator was interrupted by the shout of thousands, who with one voice, and in their rustic idiom, exclaimed aloud, " God wills it, God wills it " " It is indeed the will of God," replied the pope ; " and let this memorable word, the inspiration surely of the Holy Spirit, be for ever adopted as your cry of battle to animate the devotion and courage of the champions of Christ. His cross is the symbol of your salvation ; wear it, a red, a bloody cross, as an external mark on your breasts or shoulders, as a pledge of your sacred and irrevocable engagement." The proposal was joyfully accepted ; great numbers both of the clergy and laity impressed on their garments the sign of the cross, and solicited the pope to march at their head. This

dangerous honour was declined by the more prudent successor of Gregory, who alleged the schism of the church, and the duties of his pastoral office, recommending to the faithful, who were disqualified by sex or profession, by age or infirmity, to aid, with their prayers and alms, the personal service of their robust brethren. The name and powers of his legate he devolved on Adhemar bishop of Puy, the first who had received the cross at his hands. The foremost of the temporal chiefs was Raymond count of Toulouse, whose ambassadors in the council excused the absence, and pledged the honour of their master. After the confession and absolution of their sins, the champions of the cross were dismissed with a superfluous admonition to invite their countrymen and friends; and their departure for the Holy Land was fixed to the festival of the Assumption, the fifteenth of August, of the ensuing year.

So familiar, and as it were so natural to man, is the practice of violence, that our indulgence allows the slightest provocation, the most disputable right, as a sufficient ground of national hostility. But the name and nature of an *holy war* demands a more rigorous scrutiny; nor can we hastily believe, that the servants of the Prince of peace would unsheath the sword of destruction, unless the motive were pure, the quarrel legitimate, and the necessity inevitable. The policy of an action may be determined from the tardy lessons of experience; but, before we act, our conscience should be satisfied of the justice and propriety of our enterprise. In the age of the crusades, the Christians, both of the East and West, were persuaded of their lawfulness and merit; their arguments are clouded by the perpetual abuse of Scripture and rhetoric; but they seem to insist on the right of natural and religious defence, their peculiar title to the Holy Land, and the impiety of their Pagan and Mahometan foes. I. The right of a just defence may fairly include our civil and spiritual allies: it depends on the existence of danger; and that danger must be estimated by the two-fold consideration of the malice, and the power, of our enemies. A pernicious tenet has been imputed to the Mahometans, the duty of *extirpating* all other religions by the sword. This charge of ignorance and bigotry is refuted by the Koran, by the history of the Mussulman conquerors, and by their public and legal toleration of the Christian worship. But it cannot be denied, that the Oriental churches are depressed under their iron yoke; that, in peace and war, they asserted a divine and indefeasible claim of universal empire; and that, in their orthodox creed, the unbelieving nations are continually threatened with the loss of religion or liberty. In the eleventh century, the victorious arms of the Turks presented a real and urgent apprehension of these losses. They had subdued in less than thirty years the kingdoms of Asia, as far as Jerusalem and the Hellespont; and the Greek empire tottered on the verge of destruction. Besides an honest sympathy for

their brethren, the Latins had a right and interest in the support of Constantinople, the most important barrier of the West; and the privilege of defence must reach to prevent, as well as to repel, an impending assault. But this salutary purpose might have been accomplished by a moderate succour; and our calmer reason might disclaim the innumerable hosts and remote operations, which overwhelmed Asia and depopulated Europe. II. Palestine could add nothing to the strength or safety of the Latins; and fanaticism alone could pretend to justify the conquest of that distant and narrow province. The Christians affirmed that their inalienable title to the promised land had been sealed by the blood of their divine Saviour: it was their right and duty to rescue their inheritance from the unjust possessors, who profaned his sepulchre, and oppressed the pilgrimage of his disciples. Vainly would it be alleged that the pre-eminence of Jerusalem, and the sanctity of Palestine have been abolished with the Mosaic law; that the God of the Christians is not a local deity, and that the recovery of Bethlem or Calvary, his cradle or his tomb, will not atone for the violation of the moral precepts of the gospel. Such arguments glance aside from the leaden shield of superstition; and the religious mind will not easily relinquish its hold on the sacred ground of mystery and miracle. III. But the holy wars which have been waged in every climate of the globe, from Egypt to Livonia, and from Peru to Hindostan, require the support of some more general and flexible tenet. It has been often supposed, and sometimes affirmed, that a difference of religion is a worthy cause of hostility; that obstinate unbelievers may be slain or subdued by the champions of the cross; and that grace is the sole fountain of dominion as well as of mercy. Above four hundred years before the first crusade, the eastern and western provinces of the Roman empire had been acquired about the same time, and in the same manner, by the Barbarians of Germany and Arabia. Time and treaties had legitimated the conquests of the *Christian* Franks; but in the eyes of their subjects and neighbours, the Mahometan princes were still tyrants and usurpers, who, by the arms of war or rebellion, might be lawfully driven from their unlawful possession.

As the manners of the Christians were relaxed, their discipline of penance was enforced; and with the multiplication of sins, the remedies were multiplied. In the primitive church, a voluntary and open confession prepared the work of atonement. In the middle ages, the bishops and priests interrogated the criminal; compelled him to account for his thoughts, words, and actions; and prescribed the terms of his reconciliation with God. But as this discretionary power might alternately be abused by indulgence and tyranny, a rule of discipline was framed, to inform and regulate the spiritual judges. This mode of legislation was invented by the Greeks; their *penitentials* were translated, or imitated, in the Latin church; and, in the

time of Charlemagne, the clergy of every diocese were provided with a code, which they prudently concealed from the knowledge of the vulgar. In this dangerous estimate of crimes and punishments, each case was supposed, each difference was remarked, by the experience or penetration of the monks ; some sins are enumerated which innocence could not have suspected, and others which reason cannot believe ; and the more ordinary offences of fornication and adultery, of perjury and sacrilege, of rapine and murder, were expiated by a penance, which, according to the various circumstances, was prolonged from forty days to seven years. During this term of mortification, the patient was healed, the criminal was absolved, by a salutary regimen of fasts and prayers : the disorder of his dress was expressive of grief and remorse ; and he humbly abstained from all the business and pleasure of social life. But the rigid execution of these laws would have depopulated the palace, the camp, and the city : the Barbarians of the West believed and trembled ; but nature often rebelled against principle ; and the magistrate laboured without effect to enforce the jurisdiction of the priest. A literal accomplishment of penance was indeed impracticable ; the guilt of adultery was multiplied ; that of homicide might involve the massacre of a whole people ; each act was separately numbered ; and, in those times of anarchy and vice, a modest sinner might easily incur a debt of 300 years. His insolvency was relieved by a commutation, or *indulgence* : a year of penance was appreciated at 26 *solidi* of silver, about four pounds sterling, for the rich ; at 3 *solidi*, or nine shillings, for the indigent : and these alms were soon appropriated to the use of the church, which derived, from the redemption of sins, an inexhaustible source of opulence and dominion. A debt of 300 years, or £1200, was enough to impoverish a plentiful fortune : the scarcity of gold and silver was supplied by the alienation of land ; and the princely donations of Pepin and Charlemagne are expressly given for the *remedy* of their soul. It is a maxim of the civil law, that whosoever cannot pay with his purse, must pay with his body ; and the practice of flagellation was adopted by the monks, a cheap, though painful, equivalent. By a fantastic arithmetic, a year of penance was taxed at 3000 lashes ; and such was the skill and patience of a famous hermit, St. Dominic of the Iron Cuirass, that in six days he could discharge an entire century, by a whipping of 300,000 stripes. His example was followed by many penitents of both sexes ; and, as a vicarious sacrifice was accepted, a sturdy disciplinarian might expiate on his own back the sins of his benefactors. These compensations of the purse and the person introduced, in the eleventh century, a more honourable mode of satisfaction. The merit of military service against the Saracens of Africa and Spain, had been allowed by the predecessors of Urban the second. In the council of Clermont, that pope proclaimed a *plenary*

indulgence to those who should enlist under the banner of the cross ; the absolution of *all* their sins, and a full receipt for *all* that might be due of canonical penance. The cold philosophy of modern times is incapable of feeling the impression that was made on a sinful and fanatic world. At the voice of their pastor, the robber, the incendiary, the homicide, arose by thousands to redeem their souls, by repeating on the infidels the same deeds which they had exercised against their Christian brethren ; and the terms of atonement were eagerly embraced by offenders of every rank and denomination. None were pure ; none were exempt from the guilt and penalty of sin ; and those who were the least amenable to the justice of God and the church, were the best entitled to the temporal and eternal recompence of their pious courage. If they fell, the spirit of the Latin clergy did not hesitate to adorn their tomb with the crown of martyrdom ; and should they survive, they could expect without impatience the delay and increase of their heavenly reward. They offered their blood to the Son of God, who had laid down his life for their salvation : they took up the cross, and entered with confidence into the way of the Lord. His providence would watch over their safety ; perhaps his visible and miraculous power would smoothe the difficulties of their holy enterprise. The cloud and pillar of Jehovah had marched before the Israelites into the promised land. Might not the Christians more reasonably hope that the rivers would open for their passage ; that the walls of the strongest cities would fall at the sound of their trumpets ; and that the sun would be arrested in his mid-career, to allow them time for the destruction of the infidels ?

Of the chiefs and soldiers who marched to the holy sepulchre, I will dare to affirm, that *all* were prompted by the spirit of enthusiasm ; the belief of merit, the hope of reward, and the assurance of divine aid. But I am equally persuaded, that in *many* it was not the sole, that in *some* it was not the leading, principle of action. The use and abuse of religion are feeble to stem, they are strong and irresistible to impel the stream of national manners. Against the private wars of the Barbarians, their bloody tournaments, licentious loves, and judicial duels, the popes and synods might ineffectually thunder. It is a more easy task to provoke the metaphysical disputes of the Greeks, to drive into the cloister the victims of anarchy or despotism, to sanctify the patience of slaves and cowards, or to assume the merit of the humanity and benevolence of modern Christians. War and exercise were the reigning passions of the Franks or Latins ; they were enjoined, as a penance, to gratify those passions, to visit distant lands, and to draw their swords against the nations of the East. Their victory, or even their attempt, would immortalize the names of the intrepid heroes of the cross ; and the purest piety could not be insensible to the most splendid prospect of military glory. In the petty quarrels of Europe,

they shed the blood of their friends and countrymen, for the acquisition perhaps of a castle or a village. They could march with alacrity against the distant and hostile nations who were devoted to their arms : their fancy already grasped the golden sceptres of Asia ; and the conquest of Apulia and Sicily by the Normans might exalt to royalty the hopes of the most private adventurer. Christendom, in her rudest state, must have yielded to the climate and cultivation of the Mahometan countries ; and their natural and artificial wealth had been magnified by the tales of pilgrims, and the gifts of an imperfect commerce. The vulgar, both the great and small, were taught to believe every wonder, of lands flowing with milk and honey, of mines and treasures, of gold and diamonds, of palaces of marble and jasper, and of odoriferous groves of cinnamon and frankincense. In this earthly paradise, each warrior depended on his sword to carve a plentiful and honourable establishment, which he measured only by the extent of his wishes. Their vassals and soldiers trusted their fortunes to God and their master : the spoils of a Turkish emir might enrich the meanest follower of the camp ; and the flavour of the wines, the beauty of the Grecian women, were temptations more adapted to the nature, than to the profession, of the champions of the cross. The love of freedom was a powerful incitement to the multitudes who were oppressed by feudal or ecclesiastical tyranny. Under this holy sign the peasants and burghers, who were attached to the servitude of the glebe, might escape from an haughty lord, and transplant themselves and their families to a land of liberty. The monk might release himself from the discipline of his convent : the debtor might suspend the accumulation of usury, and the pursuit of his creditors ; and outlaws and malefactors of every cast might continue to brave the laws and elude the punishment of their crimes.

These motives were potent and numerous : when we have singly computed their weight on the mind of each individual, we must add the infinite series, the multiplying powers of example and fashion. The first proselytes became the warmest and most effectual missionaries of the cross : among their friends and countrymen they preached the duty, the merit, and the recompense, of their holy vow ; and the most reluctant hearers were insensibly drawn within the whirlpool of persuasion and authority. The martial youths were fired by the reproach or suspicion of cowardice ; the opportunity of visiting with an army the sepulchre of Christ, was embraced by the old and infirm, by women and children, who consulted rather their zeal than their strength ; and those who in the evening had derided the folly of their companions, were the most eager, the ensuing day, to tread in their footsteps. The ignorance which magnified the hopes, diminished the perils, of the enterprise. Since the Turkish conquest, the paths of pilgrimage were obliterated ; the chiefs themselves had an imperfect notion of the

length of their way and the state of their enemies ; and such was the stupidity of the people, that, at the sight of the first city or castle beyond the limits of their knowledge, they were ready to ask whether that was not the Jerusalem, the term and object of their labours. Yet the more prudent of the crusaders, who were not sure that they should be fed from heaven with a shower of quails or manna, provided themselves with those precious metals, which, in every country, are the representatives of every commodity. To defray, according to their rank, the expences of the road, princes alienated their provinces, nobles their lands and cattle, peasants their castles and the instruments of husbandry. The value of property was depreciated by the eager competition of multitudes ; while the price of arms and horses was raised to an exorbitant height by the wants and impatience of the buyers. Those who remained at home, with sense and money, were enriched by the epidemical disease : the sovereigns acquired at a cheap rate the domains of their vassals ; and the ecclesiastical purchasers completed the payment by the assurance of their prayers. The cross, which was commonly sewn on the garment, in cloth or silk, was inscribed by some zealots on their skin : an hot iron, or indelible liquor, was applied to perpetuate the mark ; and a crafty monk, who showed the miraculous impression on his breast, was repaid with the popular veneration and the richest benefices of Palestine.

The fifteenth of August had been fixed in the council of Clermont for the departure of the pilgrims : but the day was anticipated by the thoughtless and needy crowd of plebeians ; and I shall briefly dispatch the calamities which they inflicted and suffered, before I enter on the more serious and successful enterprise of the chiefs. Early in the spring (A.D. 1096, March, May, &c.), from the confines of France and Lorraine, above 60,000 of the populace of both sexes flocked round the first missionary of the crusade, and pressed him with clamorous importunity to lead them to the holy sepulchre. The hermit, assuming the character, without the talents or authority, of a general, impelled or obeyed the forward impulse of his votaries along the banks of the Rhine and Danube. Their wants and numbers soon compelled them to separate, and his lieutenant, Walter the Pennyless, a valiant though needy soldier, conducted a vanguard of pilgrims, whose condition may be determined from the proportion of 8 horsemen to 50,000 foot. The example and footsteps of Peter were closely pursued by another fanatic, the monk Godescal, whose sermons had swept away 15,000 or 20,000 peasants from the villages of Germany. Their rear was again pressed by an herd of 200,000, the most stupid and savage refuse of the people, who mingled with their devotion a brutal licence of rapine and drunkenness. Some counts and gentlemen, at the head of 3000 horse, attended the motions of the multitude to partake in the spoil ; but their genuine leaders (may we credit such folly ?) were a goose and

a goat, who were carried in the front, and to whom these worthy Christians ascribed an infusion of the divine spirit. Of these, and of other bands of enthusiasts, the first and most easy warfare was against the Jews, the murderers of the Son of God. In the trading cities of the Moselle and the Rhine, their colonies were numerous and rich ; and they enjoyed, under the protection of the emperor and the bishops, the free exercise of their religion. At Verdun, Treves, Mentz, Spires, Worms, many thousands of that unhappy people were pillaged and massacred : nor had they felt a more bloody stroke since the persecution of Hadrian. A remnant was saved by the firmness of their bishops, who accepted a feigned and transient conversion ; but the more obstinate Jews who opposed their fanaticism to the fanaticism of the Christians, barricadoed their houses, and precipitating themselves, their families, and their wealth, into the rivers or the flames, disappointed the malice, or at least the avarice, of their implacable foes.

Between the frontiers of Austria and the seat of the Byzantine monarchy, the crusaders were compelled to traverse an interval of six hundred miles ; the wild and desolate countries of Hungary and Bulgaria. The soil is fruitful, and intersected with rivers ; but it was then covered with morasses and forests, which spread to a boundless extent whenever man has ceased to exercise his dominion over the earth. Both nations had imbibed the rudiments of Christianity ; the Hungarians were ruled by their native princes ; the Bulgarians by a lieutenant of the Greek emperor ; but, on the slightest provocation, their ferocious nature was rekindled, and ample provocation was afforded by the disorders of the first pilgrims. Agriculture must have been unskilful and languid among a people whose cities were built of reeds and timber, which were deserted in the summer season for the tents of hunters and shepherds. A scanty supply of provisions was rudely demanded, forcibly seized, and greedily consumed ; and on the first quarrel, the crusaders gave a loose to indignation and revenge. But their ignorance of the country, of war, and discipline, exposed them to every snare. The Greek præfect of Bulgaria commanded a regular force ; at the trumpet of the Hungarian king, the eighth or the tenth of his martial subjects bent their bows and mounted on horseback ; their policy was insidious, and their retaliation on these pious robbers was unrelenting and bloody. About a third of the naked fugitives, and the hermit Peter was of the number, escaped to the Thracian mountains ; and the emperor, who respected the pilgrimage and succour of the Latins, conducted them by secure and easy journeys to Constantinople, and advised them to await the arrival of their brethren. For a while they remembered their faults and losses ; but no sooner were they revived by the hospitable entertainment, than their venom was again inflamed ; they stung their benefactor, and neither gardens, nor palaces, nor churches, were safe from their depredations. For his own safety, Alexius allured them to pass over to the Asiatic side of the

Bosphorus ; but their blind impetuosity soon urged them to desert the station which he had assigned, and to rush headlong against the Turks, who occupied the road of Jerusalem. The hermit, conscious of his shame, had withdrawn from the camp to Constantinople ; and his lieutenant, Walter the Pennyless, who was worthy of a better command, attempted without success to introduce some order and prudence among the herd of savages. They separated in quest of prey, and themselves fell an easy prey to the arts of the sultan. By a rumour that their foremost companions were rioting in the spoils of his capital, Soliman tempted the main body to descend into the plain of Nice ; they were overwhelmed by the Turkish arrows ; and a pyramid of bones informed their companions of the place of their defeat. Of the first crusaders, 300,000 had already perished, before a single city was rescued from the infidels, before their graver and more noble brethren had completed the preparations of their enterprise.

None of the great sovereigns of Europe embarked their persons in the first crusade. The emperor Henry the fourth was not disposed to obey the summons of the pope : Philip the first of France was occupied by his pleasures ; William Rufus of England by a recent conquest ; the kings of Spain were engaged in a domestic war against the Moors ; and the northern monarchs of Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, and Poland, were yet strangers to the passions and interests of the South. The religious ardour was more strongly felt by the princes of the second order, who held an important place in the feudal system. Their situation will naturally cast under four distinct heads the review of other names and characters ; but I may escape some needless repetition, by observing at once, that courage and the exercise of arms are the common attribute of these Christian adventurers. I. The first rank both in war and council is justly due to Godfrey of Bouillon ; and happy would it have been for the crusaders, if they had trusted themselves to the sole conduct of that accomplished hero, a worthy representative of Charlemagne, from whom he was descended in the female line. His father was of the noble race of the counts of Boulogne : Brabant, the lower province of Lorraine, was the inheritance of his mother ; and by the emperor's bounty, he was himself invested with that ducal title, which has been improperly transferred to his lordship of Bouillon in the Ardennes. In the service of Henry the fourth, he bore the great standard of the empire, and pierced with his lance the breast of Rodolph, the rebel king : Godfrey was the first who ascended the walls of Rome ; and his sickness, his vow, perhaps his remorse for bearing arms against the pope, confirmed an early resolution of visiting the holy sepulchre, not as a pilgrim, but a deliverer. His valour was matured by prudence and moderation ; his piety, though blind, was sincere ; and, in the tumult of a camp, he practised the real and fictitious virtues of a convent. Superior to the private factions of the

chiefs, he reserved his enmity for the enemies of Christ ; and though he gained a kingdom by the attempt, his pure and disinterested zeal was acknowledged by his rivals. Godfrey of Bouillon was accompanied by his two brothers, by Eustace the elder, who had succeeded to the county of Boulogne, and by the younger, Baldwin, a character of more ambiguous virtue. The duke of Lorraine was alike celebrated on either side of the Rhine : from his birth and education he was equally conversant with the French and Teutonic languages : the barons of France, Germany, and Lorraine, assembled their vassals ; and the confederate force that marched under his banner was composed of 80,000 foot and about 10,000 horse. II. In the parliament that was held at Paris, in the king's presence, about two months after the council of Clermont, Hugh count of Vermandois was the most conspicuous of the princes who assumed the cross. But the appellation of *the great* was applied, not so much to his merit or possessions (though neither were contemptible), as to the royal birth of the brother of the king of France. Robert duke of Normandy was the eldest son of William the Conqueror ; but on his father's death he was deprived of the kingdom of England, by his own indolence and the activity of his brother Rufus. The worth of Robert was degraded by an excessive levity and easiness of temper : his cheerfulness seduced him to the indulgence of pleasure ; his profuse liberality impoverished the prince and people ; his indiscriminate clemency multiplied the number of offenders ; and the amiable qualities of a private man became the essential defects of a sovereign. For the trifling sum of 10,000 marks he mortgaged Normandy during his absence to the English usurper ; but his engagement and behaviour in the holy war, announced in Robert a reformation of manners, and restored him in some degree to the public esteem. Another Robert was count of Flanders, a royal province, which, in this century, gave three queens to the thrones of France, England, and Denmark : he was surnamed the sword and lance of the Christians ; but in the exploits of a soldier, he sometimes forgot the duties of a general. Stephen, count of Chartres, of Blois, and of Troyes, was one of the richest princes of the age ; and the number of his castles has been compared to the 365 days of the year. His mind was improved by literature ; and in the council of the chiefs, the eloquent Stephen was chosen to discharge the office of their president. These four were the principal leaders of the French, the Normans, and the pilgrims of the British isles : but the list of the barons who were possessed of three or four towns, would exceed, says a contemporary, the catalogue of the Trojan war. III. In the south of France, the command was assumed by Adhemar, bishop of Puy, the pope's legate, and by Raymond, count of St. Giles and Toulouse, who added the prouder titles of duke of Narbonne and marquis of Provence. The former was a respectable prelate, alike qualified for this world and

the next. The latter was a veteran warrior, who had fought against the Saracens of Spain, and who consecrated his declining age, not only to the deliverance, but to the perpetual service, of the holy sepulchre. His experience and riches gave him a strong ascendant in the Christian camp, whose distress he was often able, and sometimes willing, to relieve. But it was easier for him to extort the praise of the Infidels, than to preserve the love of his subjects and associates. His eminent qualities were clouded by a temper, haughty, envious, and obstinate; and though he resigned an ample patrimony for the cause of God, his piety in the public opinion, was not exempt from avarice and ambition. A mercantile, rather than a martial spirit, prevailed among his *provincials*, a common name, which included the natives of Auvergne and Languedoc, the vassals of the kingdom of Burgundy or Arles. From the adjacent frontier of Spain, he drew a band of hardy adventurers; as he marched through Lombardy, a crowd of Italians flocked to his standard, and his united force consisted of 100,000 horse and foot. If Raymond was the first to enlist and the last to depart, the delay may be excused by the greatness of his preparation and the promise of an everlasting farewell. IV. The name of Bohemond, the son of Robert Guiscard, was already famous by his double victory over the Greek emperor: but his father's will had reduced him to the principality of Tarentum, and the remembrance of his Eastern trophies, still he was awakened by the rumour and passage of the French pilgrims. It is in the person of this Norman chief that we may seek for the coolest policy and ambition with a small alloy of religious fanaticism. His conduct may justify a belief that he had secretly directed the design of the pope, which he affected to second with astonishment and zeal: at the siege of Amalphi, his example and discourse inflamed the passions of a confederate army; he instantly tore his garment to supply crosses for the numerous candidates, and prepared to visit Constantinople and Asia at the head of 10,000 horse and 20,000 foot. Several princes of the Norman race accompanied this veteran general; and his cousin Tancred was the partner, rather than the servant, of the war. In the accomplished character of Tancred, we discover all the virtues of a perfect knight, the true spirit of chivalry, which inspired the generous sentiments and social offices of man, far better than the base philosophy, or the baser religion of the times.

Between the age of Charlemagne and that of the crusades, a revolution had taken place among the Spaniards, the Normans, and the French, which was gradually extended to the rest of Europe. The service of the infantry was degraded to the plebeians; the cavalry formed the strength of the armies, and the honourable name of *miles*, or soldier, was confined to the gentlemen who served on horseback, and were invested with the character of knighthood. The dukes and

counts, who had usurped the rights of sovereignty, divided the provinces among their faithful barons : the barons distributed among their vassals the fiefs or benefices of their jurisdiction ; and these military tenants, the peers of each other and of their lord, composed the noble or equestrian order, which disdained to conceive the peasant or burgher as of the same species with themselves. The dignity of their birth was preserved by pure and equal alliances ; their sons alone, who could produce four quarters or lines of ancestry, without spot or reproach, might legally pretend to the honour of knighthood ; but a valiant plebeian was sometimes enriched and ennobled by the sword, and became the father of a new race. A single knight could impart, according to his judgment, the character which he received ; and the warlike sovereigns of Europe derived more glory from this personal distinction than from the lustre of their diadem. This ceremony, of which some traces may be found in Tacitus and the woods of Germany, was in its origin simple and profane ; the candidate, after some previous trial, was invested with the sword and spurs ; and his cheek or shoulder was touched with a slight blow, as an emblem of the last affront which it was lawful for him to endure. But superstition mingled in every public and private action of life ; in the holy wars, it sanctified the profession of arms ; and the order of chivalry was assimilated in its rights and privileges to the sacred orders of priesthood. The bath and white garment of the novice, were an indecent copy of the regeneration of baptism ; his sword, which he offered on the altar, was blessed by the ministers of religion ; his solemn reception was preceded by fasts and vigils ; and he was created a knight in the name of God, of St. George, and of St. Michael the archangel. He swore to accomplish the duties of his profession ; and education, example, and the public opinion, were the inviolable guardians of his oath. As the champion of God and the ladies (I blush to unite such discordant names), he devoted himself to speak the truth ; to maintain the right ; to protect the distressed ; to practise *courtesy*, a virtue less familiar to the ancients ; to pursue the infidels ; to despise the allurements of ease and safety ; and to vindicate in every perilous adventure the honour of his character. The abuse of the same spirit provoked the illiterate knight to disdain the arts of industry and peace ; to esteem himself the sole judge and avenger of his own injuries ; and proudly to neglect the laws of civil society and military discipline. Yet the benefits of this institution, to refine the temper of Barbarians, and to infuse some principles of faith, justice, and humanity, were strongly felt, and have been often observed. The asperity of national prejudice was softened ; and the community of religion and arms spread a similar colour and generous emulation over the face of Christendom. Abroad in enterprise and pilgrimage, at home in martial exercise, the warriors of every country were perpetually associated ;

and impartial taste must prefer a Gothic tournament to the Olympic games of classic antiquity. Instead of the naked spectacles which corrupted the manners of the Greeks ; the pompous decoration of the lists was crowned with the presence of high-born beauty, from whose hands the conqueror received the prize of his dexterity and courage. The skill and strength that were exerted in wrestling and boxing, bear a distant and doubtful relation to the merit of a soldier ; but the tournaments, as they were invented in France, and eagerly adopted both in the East and West, presented a lively image of the business of the field. The single combats, the general skirmish, the defence of a pass, or castle, were rehearsed as in actual service ; and the contest, both in real and mimic war, was decided by the superior management of the horse and lance. The lance was the proper and peculiar weapon of the knight : his horse was of a large and heavy breed ; but this charger, till he was roused by the approaching danger, was usually led by an attendant, and he quietly rode a pad or palfrey of a more easy pace. His helmet, and sword, his greaves, and buckler, it would be superfluous to describe ; but I may remark, that at the period of the crusades, the armour was less ponderous than in later times ; and that, instead of a massy cuirass, his breast was defended by an hauberk or coat of mail. When their long lances were fixed in the rest, the warriors furiously spurred their horses against the foe ; and the light cavalry of the Turks and Arabs could seldom stand against the direct and impetuous weight of their charge. Each knight was attended to the field by his faithful squire, a youth of equal birth and similar hopes ; he was followed by his archers and men at arms, and four, or five, or six soldiers, were computed as the furniture of a complete *lance*. In the expeditions to the neighbouring kingdoms or the Holy Land, the duties of the feudal tenure no longer subsisted ; the voluntary service of the knights and their followers was either prompted by zeal or attachment, or purchased with rewards and promises ; and the numbers of each squadron were measured by the power, the wealth, and the fame of each independent chieftain. They were distinguished by his banner, his armorial coat, and his cry of war ; and the most ancient families of Europe must seek in these achievements the origin and proof of their nobility. In this portrait of chivalry, I have been urged to anticipate on the story of the crusades, at once an effect and a cause, of this memorable institution.

Such were the troops, and such the leaders, who assumed the cross for the deliverance of the holy sepulchre. As soon as they were relieved (A.D. 1096, Aug. 15—A.D. 1097, May) by the absence of the plebeian multitude, they encouraged each other, by interviews and messages, to accomplish their vow and hasten their departure. Their wives and sisters were desirous of partaking the danger and merit of the pilgrimage ; their portable treasures were conveyed in bars of

silver and gold ; and the princes and barons were attended by their equipage of hounds and hawks to amuse their leisure and to supply their table. The difficulty of procuring subsistence for so many myriads of men and horses, engaged them to separate their forces ; their choice or situation determined the road ; and it was agreed to meet in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, and from thence to begin their operations against the Turks. From the banks of the Meuse and the Moselle, Godfrey of Bouillon followed the direct way of Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria : and, as long as he exercised the sole command, every step afforded some proof of his prudence and virtue. On the confines of Hungary he was stopped three weeks by a Christian people, to whom the name, or at least the abuse, of the cross was justly odious. The Hungarians still smarted with the wounds which they had received from the first pilgrims : in their turn they had abused the right of defence and retaliation ; and they had reason to apprehend a severe revenge from an hero of the same nation, and who was engaged in the same cause. But, after weighing the motives and the events, the virtuous duke was content to pity the crimes and misfortunes of his worthless brethren ; and his twelve deputies, the messengers of peace, requested in his name a free passage and an equal market. To remove their suspicions, Godfrey trusted himself, and afterwards his brother, to the faith of Carloman king of Hungary, who treated them with a simple but hospitable entertainment : the treaty was sanctified by their common gospel ; and a proclamation, under pain of death, restrained the animosity and licence of the Latin soldiers. From Austria to Belgrade, they traversed the plains of Hungary, without enduring or offering an injury ; and the proximity of Carloman, who hovered on their flanks with his numerous cavalry, was a precaution not less useful for their safety than for his own. They reached the banks of the Save ; and no sooner had they passed the river than the king of Hungary restored the hostages, and saluted their departure with the fairest wishes for the success of their enterprise. With the same conduct and discipline, Godfrey pervaded the woods of Bulgaria and the frontiers of Thrace ; and might congratulate himself, that he had almost reached the first term of his pilgrimage, without drawing his sword against a Christian adversary. After an easy and pleasant journey through Lombardy, from Turin to Aquileia, Raymond and his provincials marched forty days through the savage country of Dalmatia and Sclavonia. The weather was a perpetual fog : the land was mountainous and desolate ; the natives were either fugitive or hostile : loose in their religion and government, they refused to furnish provisions or guides ; murdered the stragglers ; and exercised by night and day the vigilance of the count, who derived more security from the punishment of some captive robbers than from his interview and treaty with the

prince of Scodra. His march between Durazzo and Constantinople was harassed, without being stopped, by the peasants and soldiers of the Greek emperor ; and the same faint and ambiguous hostility was prepared for the remaining chiefs, who passed the Hadriatic from the coast of Italy. Bohemond had arms and vessels, and foresight and discipline ; and his name was not forgotten in the provinces of Epirus and Thessaly. Whatever obstacles he encountered were surmounted by his military conduct and the valour of Tancred ; and if the Norman prince affected to spare the Greeks, he gorged his soldiers with the full plunder of an heretical castle. The nobles of France pressed forward with the vain and thoughtless ardour of which their nation has been sometimes accused. From the Alps to Apulia the march of Hugh the Great, of the two Roberts, and of Stephen of Chartres, through a wealthy country, and amidst the applauding Catholics, was a devout or triumphant progress : they kissed the feet of the Roman pontiff ; and the golden standard of St. Peter was delivered to the brother of the French monarch. But in this visit of piety and pleasure, they neglected to secure the season, and the means, of their embarkation : the winter was insensibly lost ; their troops were scattered and corrupted in the towns of Italy. They separately accomplished their passage, regardless of safety or dignity : and within nine months from the feast of the Assumption, the day appointed by Urban, all the Latin princes had reached Constantinople. But the count of Vermandois was produced as a captive ; his foremost vessels were scattered by a tempest ; and his person, against the law of nations, was detained by the lieutenants of Alexius. Yet the arrival of Hugh had been announced by four-and-twenty knights in golden armour, who commanded the emperor to revere the general of the Latin Christians, the brother of the King of kings.

In some Oriental tale I have read the fable of a shepherd who was ruined by the accomplishment of his own wishes : he had prayed for water ; the Ganges was turned into his grounds, and his flock and cottage were swept away by the inundation. Such was the fortune, or at least the apprehension, of the Greek emperor Alexius Comnenus (A.D. 1096. Dec.—A.D. 1097. May), whose name has already appeared in this history, and whose conduct is so differently represented by his daughter Anne, and by the Latin writers. In the council of Placentia, his ambassadors had solicited a moderate succour, perhaps of 10,000 soldiers : but he was astonished by the approach of so many potent chiefs and fanatic nations. The emperor fluctuated between hope and fear, between timidity and courage ; but in the crooked policy which he mistook for wisdom, I cannot believe, I cannot discern that he maliciously conspired against the life or honour of the French heroes. The promiscuous multitudes of Peter the hermit, were savage beasts, alike destitute of humanity and reason : nor was it pos-

sible for Alexius to prevent or deplore their destruction. The troops of Godfrey and his peers were less contemptible, but not less suspicious, to the Greek emperor. Their motives *might* be pure and pious; but he was equally alarmed by his knowledge of the ambitious Bohemond, and his ignorance of the Transalpine chiefs: the courage of the French was blind and headstrong; they might be tempted by the luxury and wealth of Greece, and elated by the view and opinion of their invincible strength; and Jerusalem might be forgotten in the prospect of Constantinople. After a long march and painful abstinence, the troops of Godfrey encamped in the plains of Thrace; they heard with indignation that their brother, the count of Vermandois, was imprisoned by the Greeks; and their reluctant duke was compelled to indulge them in some freedom of retaliation and rapine. They were appeased by the submission of Alexius; he promised to supply their camp; and as they refused, in the midst of winter, to pass the Bosphorus, their quarters were assigned among the gardens and palaces on the shores of that narrow sea. But an incurable jealousy still rankled in the minds of the two nations, who despised each other as slaves and Barbarians. Ignorance is the ground of suspicion, and suspicion was inflamed into daily provocations: prejudice is blind, hunger is deaf; and Alexius is accused of a design to starve or assault the Latins in a dangerous post, on all sides encompassed with the waters. Godfrey sounded his trumpet, burst the net, overspread the plain, and insulted the suburbs; but the gates of Constantinople were strongly fortified; the ramparts were lined with archers; and after a doubtful conflict, both parties listened to the voice of peace and religion. The gifts and promises of the emperor insensibly soothed the fierce spirit of the western strangers; as a Christian warrior, he rekindled their zeal for the prosecution of their holy enterprise, which he engaged to second with his troops and treasures. On the return of spring, Godfrey was persuaded to occupy a pleasant and plentiful camp in Asia; and no sooner had he passed the Bosphorus, than the Greek vessels were suddenly recalled to the opposite shore. The same policy was repeated with the succeeding chiefs, who were swayed by the example, and weakened by the departure, of their foremost companions. By his skill and diligence, Alexius prevented the union of any two of the confederate armies at the same moment under the walls of Constantinople; and before the feast of the Pentecost not a Latin pilgrim was left on the coast of Europe.

The same arms which threatened Europe, might deliver Asia, and repel the Turks from the neighbouring shores of the Bosphorus and Hellespont. The fair provinces from Nice to Antioch were the recent patrimony of the Roman emperor; and his ancient and perpetual claim still embraced the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt. In his enthusiasm Alexius indulged, or affected, the ambitious hope of leading his new

allies to subvert the thrones of the East : but the calmer dictates of reason and temper dissuaded him from exposing his royal person to the faith of unknown and lawless Barbarians. His prudence, or his pride, was content with extorting from the French princes an oath of homage and fidelity, and a solemn promise, that they would either restore, or hold, their Asiatic conquests, as the humble and loyal vassals of the Roman empire. Their independent spirit was fired at the mention of this foreign and voluntary servitude ; they successively yielded to the dexterous application of gifts and flattery ; and the first proselytes became the most eloquent and effectual missionaries to multiply the companions of their shame. The pride of Hugh of Vermandois was soothed by the honours of his captivity ; and in the brother of the French king, the example of submission was prevalent and weighty. In the mind of Godfrey of Bouillon every human consideration was subordinate to the glory of God and the success of the crusade. He had firmly resisted the temptations of Bohemond and Raymond, who urged the attack and conquest of Constantinople. Alexius esteemed his virtues, deservedly named him the champion of the empire, and dignified his homage with the filial name and the rites of adoption. The hateful Bohemond was received as a true and ancient ally ; and if the emperor reminded him of former hostilities, it was only to praise the valour that he had displayed, and the glory that he had acquired, in the fields of Durazzo and Larissa. The son of Guiscard was lodged and entertained, and served with imperial pomp : one day, as he passed through the gallery of the palace, a door was carelessly left open to expose a pile of gold and silver, of silk and gems, of curious and costly furniture, that was heaped, in seeming disorder, from the floor to the roof of the chamber. "What conquests," exclaimed the ambitious miser, "might not be achieved by the possession of such a treasure?" "It is your own," replied a Greek attendant who watched the motions of his soul ; and Bohemond, after some hesitation, condescended to accept this magnificent present. The Norman was flattered by the assurance of an independent principality, and Alexius eluded, rather than denied, his daring demand of the office of great domestic, or general, of the East. The two Roberts, the son of the conqueror of England, and the kinsman of three queens, bowed in their turn before the Byzantine throne. A private letter of Stephen of Chartres attests his admiration of the emperor, the most excellent and liberal of men, who taught him to believe that he was a favourite, and promised to educate and establish his youngest son. In his southern province, the count of St. Giles and Toulouse faintly recognized the supremacy of the king of France, a prince of a foreign nation and language. At the head of 100,000 men, he declared, that he was the soldier and servant of Christ alone, and that the Greek might be satisfied with an equal treaty of alliance and friendship. His obstinate resistance enhanced the value and the

price of his submission ; and he shone, says the princess Anna, among the Barbarians, as the sun amidst the stars of heaven. His disgust of the noise and insolence of the French, his suspicions of the designs of Bohemond, the emperor imparted to his faithful Raymond ; and that aged statesman might clearly discern, that however false in friendship, he was sincere in his enmity. The spirit of chivalry was last subdued in the person of Tancred ; and none could deem themselves dishonoured by the imitation of that gallant knight. He disdained the gold and flattery of the Greek monarch ; assaulted in his presence an insolent patrician ; escaped to Asia in the habit of a private soldier ; and yielded with a sigh to the authority of Bohemond and the interest of the Christian cause. The best and most ostensible reason was the impossibility of passing the sea and accomplishing their vow, without the licence and the vessels of Alexius ; but they cherished a secret hope, that as soon as they trod the continent of Asia, their swords would obliterate their shame, and dissolve the engagement, which on his side might not be very faithfully performed. The ceremony of their homage was grateful to a people who had long since considered pride as the substitute of power. High on his throne, the emperor sat mute and immovable : his majesty was adored by the Latin princes ; and they submitted to kiss either his feet or his knees, an indignity which their own writers are ashamed to confess and unable to deny.

Private or public interest suppressed the murmurs of the dukes and counts ; but a French baron (he is supposed to be Robert of Paris) presumed to ascend the throne, and to place himself by the side of Alexius. The sage reproof of Baldwin provoked him to exclaim, in his barbarous idiom, "Who is this rustic, that keeps his seat while so many valiant captains are standing round him?" The emperor maintained his silence, dissembled his indignation, and questioned his interpreter concerning the meaning of the words, which he partly suspected from the universal language of gesture and countenance. Before the departure of the pilgrims, he endeavoured to learn the name and condition of the audacious baron. "I am a Frenchman," replied Robert, "of the purest and most ancient nobility of my country. All that I know is, that there is a church in my neighbourhood, the resort of those who are desirous of approving their valour in single combat. Till an enemy appears, they address their prayers to God and his saints. That church I have frequently visited, but never have I found an antagonist who dared to accept my defiance." Alexius dismissed the challenger with some prudent advice for his conduct in the Turkish warfare ; and history repeats with pleasure this lively example of the manners of his age and country.

The conquest of Asia was undertaken and achieved by Alexander, with 35,000 Macedonians and Greeks ; and his best hope was in the strength and discipline of his phalanx of infantry. The principal force

of the crusaders consisted in their cavalry ; and when that force was mustered in the plains of Bithynia (A.D. 1097. May) the knights and their martial attendants on horseback amounted to 100,000 fighting men, completely armed with the helmet and coat of mail. The value of these soldiers deserved a strict and authentic account ; and the flower of European chivalry might furnish, in a first effort, this formidable body of heavy horse. A part of the infantry might be enrolled for the service of scouts, pioneers, and archers ; but the promiscuous crowd were lost in their own disorder ; and we depend not on the eyes or knowledge, but on the belief and fancy, of a chaplain of count Baldwin, in the estimate of 600,000 pilgrims able to bear arms, besides the priests and monks, the women and children, of the Latin camp. The reader starts ; but before he is recovered from his surprise, I shall add, on the same testimony, that if all who took the cross had accomplished their vow, above SIX MILLIONS would have migrated from Europe to Asia. Under this oppression of faith, I derive some relief from a more sagacious and thinking writer, who, after the same review of the cavalry, accuses the credulity of the priest of Chartres, and even doubts whether the *Cisalpine* regions (in the geography of a Frenchman) were sufficient to produce and pour forth such incredible multitudes. The coolest scepticism will remember, that of these religious volunteers great numbers never beheld Constantinople and Nice. Of enthusiasm the influence is irregular and transient : many were detained at home by reason or cowardice, by poverty or weakness ; and many were repulsed by the obstacles of the way, the more insuperable as they were unforeseen to these ignorant fanatics. The savage countries of Hungary and Bulgaria were whitened with their bones : their vanguard was cut in pieces by the Turkish sultan ; and the loss of the first adventure by the sword, or climate, or fatigue, has already been stated at 300,000 men. Yet the myriads that survived, that marched, that pressed forwards on the holy pilgrimage, were a subject of astonishment to themselves and to the Greeks. The copious energy of her language sinks under the efforts of the princess Anna : the images of locusts, of leaves and flowers, of the sands of the sea, or the stars of heaven, imperfectly represent what she had seen and heard ; and the daughter of Alexius exclaims, that Europe was loosened from its foundations, and hurled against Asia. The ancient hosts of Darius and Xerxes labour under the same doubt of a vague and indefinite magnitude ; but I am inclined to believe, that a larger number has never been contained within the lines of a single camp than at the siege of Nice, the first operation of the Latin princes. Their motives, their characters, and their arms, have been already displayed. Of their troops, the most numerous portion were natives of France : the Low Countries, the banks of the Rhine, and Apulia, sent a powerful reinforcement : some bands of adventurers were drawn

from Spain, Lombardy, and England ; and from the distant bogs and mountains of Ireland or Scotland issued some naked and savage fanatics, ferocious at home but unwarlike abroad. Had not superstition condemned the sacrilegious prudence of depriving the poorest or weakest Christian of the merit of the pilgrimage, the useless crowd, with mouths but without hands, might have been stationed in the Greek empire, till their companions had opened and secured the way of the Lord. A small remnant of the pilgrims, who passed the Bosphorus, was permitted to visit the holy sepulchre. Their northern constitution was scorched by the rays, and infected by the vapours, of a Syrian sun. They consumed, with heedless prodigality, their stores of water and provision : their numbers exhausted the inland country ; the sea was remote, the Greeks were unfriendly, and the Christians of every sect fled before the voracious and cruel rapine of their brethren. In the dire necessity of famine, they sometimes roasted and devoured the flesh of their infant or adult captives. Among the Turks and Saracens, the idolaters of Europe were rendered more odious by the name and reputation of cannibals : the spies who introduced themselves into the kitchen of Bohemond, were shown several human bodies turning on the spit ; and the artful Norman encouraged a report, which increased at the same time the abhorrence and the terror of the infidels.

I have expatiated with pleasure on the first steps of the crusaders, as they paint the manners and character of Europe : but I shall abridge the tedious and uniform narrative of their blind achievements, which were performed by strength and are described by ignorance. From their first station in the neighbourhood of Nicomedia, they advanced in successive divisions ; passed the contracted limit of the Greek empire ; opened a road through the hills, and commenced (A.D. 1097. May 14—June 20), by the siege of his capital, their pious warfare against the Turkish sultan. His kingdom of Roum extended from the Hellespont to the confines of Syria, and barred the pilgrimage of Jerusalem : his name was Kilidge-Arslan, or Soliman, of the race of Seljuk, and son of the first conqueror ; and in the defence of a land which the Turks considered as their own, he deserved the praise of his enemies, by whom alone he is known to posterity. Yielding to the first impulse of the torrent, he deposited his family and treasure in Nice ; retired to the mountains with 50,000 horse ; and twice descended to assault the camps or quarters of the Christian besiegers, which formed an imperfect circle of above six miles. The lofty and solid walls of Nice were covered by a deep ditch, and flanked by 370 towers ; and on the verge of Christendom, the Moslems were trained in arms and inflamed by religion. Before this city, the French princes occupied their stations, and prosecuted their attacks without correspondence or subordination : emulation prompted their valour ; but their

valour was sullied by cruelty, and their emulation degenerated into envy and civil discord. In the siege of Nice the arts and engines of antiquity were employed by the Latins ; the mine and the battering-ram, the tortoise, and the belfry or movable turret, artificial fire, and the *catapult* and *balist*, the sling, and the cross-bow for the casting of stones and darts. In the space of seven weeks, much labour and blood were expended, and some progress, especially by count Raymond, was made on the side of the besiegers. But the Turks could protract their resistance, and secure their escape, as long as they were masters of the lake Ascanius, which stretches several miles to the westward of the city. The means of conquest were supplied by the prudence and industry of Alexius ; a great number of boats was transported on sledges from the sea to the lake ; they were filled with the most dexterous of his archers ; the flight of the sultana was intercepted ; Nice was invested by land and water ; and a Greek emissary persuaded the inhabitants to accept his master's protection, and to save themselves by a timely surrender, from the rage of the savages of Europe. In the moment of victory, or at least of hope, the crusaders, thirsting for blood and plunder, were awed by the Imperial banner that streamed from the citadel ; and Alexius guarded with jealous vigilance this important conquest. The murmurs of the chiefs were stifled by honour or interest ; and after an halt of nine days, they directed their march towards Phrygia under the guidance of a Greek general, whom they suspected of secret connivance with the sultan. The consort and the principal servants of Soliman had been honourably restored without ransom ; and the emperor's generosity to the *miscreants** was interpreted as treason to the Christian cause.

Soliman was rather provoked than dismayed by the loss of his capital : he admonished his subjects and allies of this strange invasion of the western Barbarians ; the Turkish emirs obeyed the call of loyalty or religion ; the Turkman hordes encamped round his standard ; and his whole force is loosely stated by the Christians at 200,000, or even 360,000 horse. Yet he patiently waited till they had left behind them the sea and the Greek frontier ; and hovering on the flanks, observed their careless and confident progress in two columns beyond the view of each other. Some miles before they could reach Dorylæum in Phrygia, the left, and least numerous division was surprised and attacked (A.D. 1097. July 4), and almost oppressed by the Turkish cavalry. The heat of the weather, the clouds of arrows, and the barbarous onset, overwhelmed the crusaders ; they lost their order and confidence, and the fainting fight was sustained by the personal valour, rather than by the military conduct, of Bohemond, Tancred, and

* *Miscreant*, a word invented by the French crusaders, and confined in that language to its primitive sense. It should seem, that the zeal of our ancestors boiled higher, and that they branded every unbeliever as a rascal. A similar prejudice still lurks in the minds of many who think themselves Christians.

Robert of Normandy. They were revived by the welcome banners of duke Godfrey, who flew to their succour with the count of Vermandois, and 60,000 horse ; and was followed by Raymond of Toulouse, the bishop of Puy, and the remainder of the sacred army. Without a moment's pause, they formed in new order, and advanced to a second battle. They were received with equal resolution ; and, in their common disdain for the unwarlike people of Greece and Asia, it was confessed on both sides, that the Turks and the Franks were the only nations entitled to the appellation of soldiers. Their encounter was varied and balanced by the contrast of arms and discipline ; of the direct charge, and wheeling evolutions ; of the couched lance, and the brandished javelin ; of a weighty broad-sword and a crooked sabre ; of cumbrous armour, and thin flowing robes ; and of the long Tartar bow, and the *arbalist* or cross-bow, a deadly weapon, yet unknown to the Orientals. As long as the horses were fresh and the quivers full, Soliman maintained the advantage of the day ; and 4000 Christians were pierced by the Turkish arrows. In the evening, swiftness yielded to strength ; on either side the numbers were equal, or at least as great as any ground could hold, or any generals could manage ; but in turning the hills, the last division of Raymond and his *provincials* was led, perhaps without design, on the rear of an exhausted enemy ; and the long contest was determined. Besides a nameless and unaccounted multitude, 3000 *Pagan* knights were slain in the battle and pursuit ; the camp of Soliman was pillaged ; and in the variety of precious spoil, the curiosity of the Latins was amused with foreign arms and apparel, and the new aspect of dromedaries and camels. The importance of the victory was proved by the hasty retreat of the sultan : reserving 10,000 guards of the relics of his army, Soliman evacuated the kingdom of Roum, and hastened to implore the aid and kindle the resentment, of his Eastern brethren. In a march of 500 miles, the crusaders (July—Sept.) traversed the lesser Asia through a wasted land and deserted towns, without either finding a friend or an enemy. The geographer may trace the position of Dorylæum, Antioch, of Pisidia, Iconium, Archelais, and Germanicia, and may compare those classic appellations with the modern names of Eskishehr the old city, Akshehr the white city, Cogni, Erekli, and Marash. As the pilgrims passed over a desert, where a draught of water is exchanged for silver, they were tormented by intolerable thirst ; and on the banks of the first rivulet, their haste and intemperance were still more pernicious to the disorderly throng. They climbed with toil and danger the steep and slippery sides of mount Taurus : many of the soldiers cast away their arms to secure their footsteps ; and had not terror preceded their van, the long and trembling file might have been driven down the precipice by a handful of resolute enemies. Two of their most respectable chiefs, the duke of Lorraine and the count of Toulouse, were carried in

litters : Raymond was raised, as it is said by miracle, from an hopeless malady ; and Godfrey had been torn by a bear, as he pursued that rough and perilous chace in the mountains of Pisidia.

To improve the general consternation, the cousin of Bohemond and the brother of Godfrey were detached from the main army with their respective squadrons of five, and of seven hundred knights. They over-ran in a rapid career the hills and sea-coast of Cilicia, from Cogni to the Syrian gates : the Norman standard was first planted on the walls of Tarsus and Malmistra ; but the proud injustice of Baldwin at length provoked the patient and generous Italian ; and they turned their consecrated swords against each other in a private and profane quarrel. Honour was the motive, and fame the reward, of Tancred ; but fortune smiled on the more selfish enterprise of his rival. He was called to the assistance of a Greek or Armenian tyrant, who had been suffered under the Turkish yoke to reign over the Christians of Edessa. Baldwin accepted the character of his son and champion ; but no sooner was he introduced into the city, than he inflamed the people to the massacre of his father, occupied the throne and treasure, extended his conquests over the hills of Armenia and the plain of Mesopotamia, and founded (A.D. 1097—1151) the first principality of the Franks or Latins, which subsisted fifty-four years beyond the Euphrates.

Before the Franks could enter Syria, the summer, and even the autumn, were completely wasted : the siege of Antioch (A.D. 1097, Oct. 21), or the separation and repose of the army during the winter season, was strongly debated in their council : the love of arms and the holy sepulchre urged them to advance ; and reason perhaps was on the side of resolution, since every hour of delay abates the fame and force of the invader, and multiplies the resources of defensive war. The capital of Syria was protected by the river Orontes ; and the *iron bridge*, of nine arches, derives its name from the massy gates of the two towers which are constructed at either end. They were opened (A.D. 1098. June 3) by the sword of the duke of Normandy : his victory gave entrance to 300,000 crusaders, an account which may allow some scope for losses and desertion, but which clearly detects much exaggeration in the review of Nice. In the description of Antioch, it is not easy to define a middle term between her ancient magnificence, under the successors of Alexander and Augustus, and the modern aspect of Turkish desolation. The Tetrapolis, or four cities, if they retained their name and position, must have left a large vacuity in a circumference of twelve miles ; and that measure, as well as the number of four hundred towers, are not perfectly consistent with the five gates, so often mentioned in the history of the siege. Yet Antioch must have still flourished as a great and populous capital. At the head of the Turkish emirs, Baghisian, a veteran chief, commanded in the place : his garrison was composed of six or seven thousand

horse, and fifteen or twenty thousand foot : one hundred thousand Moslems are said to have fallen by the sword ; and their numbers were probably inferior to the Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians, who had been no more than fourteen years the slaves of the house of Seljuk. From the remains of a solid and stately wall, it appears to have arisen to the height of three-score feet in the valleys ; and wherever less art and labour had been applied, the ground was supposed to be defended by the river, the morass, and the mountains. Notwithstanding these fortifications, the city had been repeatedly taken by the Persians, the Arabs, the Greeks, and the Turks ; so large a circuit must have yielded many pervious points of attack ; and in a siege that was formed about the middle of October, the vigour of the execution could alone justify the boldness of the attempt. Whatever strength and valour could perform in the field was abundantly discharged by the champions of the cross : in the frequent occasions of sallies, of forage, of the attack and defence of convoys, they were often victorious, and we can only complain, that their exploits are sometimes enlarged beyond the scale of probability and truth. The sword of Godfrey divided a Turk from the shoulder to the haunch ; and one half of the infidel fell to the ground, while the other was transported by his horse to the city gate. As Robert of Normandy rode against his antagonist, " I devote thy head," he piously exclaimed, " to the dæmons of hell ;" and that head was instantly cloven to the breast by the resistless stroke of his descending faulchion. But the reality or report of such gigantic prowess must have taught the Moslems to keep within their walls ; and against those walls of earth or stone, the sword and the lance were unavailing weapons. In the slow and successive labours of a siege, the crusaders were supine and ignorant, without skill to contrive, or money to purchase, or industry to use, the artificial engines and implements of assault. In the conquest of Nice, they had been powerfully assisted by the wealth and knowledge of the Greek emperor : his absence was poorly supplied by some Genoese and Pisan vessels, that were attracted by religion or trade to the coast of Syria : the stores were scanty, the return precarious, and the communication difficult and dangerous. Indolence or weakness had prevented the Franks from investing the entire circuit ; and the perpetual freedom of two gates relieved the wants and recruited the garrison of the city. At the end of seven months, after the ruin of their cavalry, and an enormous loss by famine, desertion, and fatigue, the progress of the crusaders was imperceptible, and their success remote, if the Latin Ulysses, the artful and ambitious Bohemond, had not employed the arms of cunning and deceit. The Christians of Antioch were numerous and discontented : Phirouz, a Syrian renegado, had acquired the favour of the emir and the command of three towers ; and the merit of his repentance disguised to the Latins, and perhaps to himself, the foul design of perfidy and treason. A secret correspondence, for their mutual interest,

was soon established between Phirouz and the prince of Tarento ; and Bohemond declared in the council of the chiefs, that he could deliver the city into their hands. But he claimed the sovereignty of Antioch as the reward of his service ; and the proposal which had been rejected by the envy, was at length extorted by the distress, of his equals. The nocturnal surprise was executed by the French and Norman princes, who ascended in person the scaling-ladders that were thrown from the walls : their new proselyte, after the murder of his too scrupulous brother, embraced and introduced the servants of Christ ; the army rushed through the gates ; and the Moslems soon found, that although mercy was hopeless, resistance was impotent. But the citadel still refused to surrender ; and the victors themselves were speedily encompassed and besieged by the innumerable forces of Kerboga, prince of Mosul, who, with twenty-eight Turkish emirs, advanced to the deliverance of Antioch. Five-and-twenty days the Christians spent on the verge of destruction ; and the proud lieutenant of the caliph and the sultan left them only the choice of servitude or death. In this extremity they collected the relics of their strength, sallied from the town, and in a single memorable day (A.D. 1098. June 28) annihilated or dispersed the host of Turks and Arabians, which they might safely report to have consisted of 600,000 men. Their supernatural allies I shall proceed to consider : the human causes of the victory of Antioch were the fearless despair of the Franks ; and the surprise, the discord, perhaps the errors, of their unskillful and presumptuous adversaries. The battle is described with as much disorder as it was fought ; but we may observe the tent of Kerboga, a movable palace, enriched with the luxury of Asia, and capable of holding above 2000 persons ; we may distinguish his 3000 guards, who were cased, the horses as well as the men, in complete steel.

In the eventful period of the siege and defence of Antioch, the crusaders were alternately exalted by victory or sunk in despair ; either swelled with plenty or emaciated with hunger. A speculative reasoner might suppose, that their faith had a strong and serious influence on their practice ; and that the soldiers of the cross, the deliverers of the holy sepulchre, prepared themselves by a sober and virtuous life for the daily contemplation of martyrdom. Experience blows away this charitable illusion : and seldom does the history of profane war display such scenes of intemperance as were exhibited under the walls of Antioch. The grove of Daphne no longer flourished ; but the Syrian air was still impregnated with the same vices ; the Christians were seduced by every temptation that nature either prompts or reprobates ; the authority of the chiefs was despised ; and sermons and edicts were alike fruitless against those scandalous disorders, not less pernicious to military discipline, than repugnant to evangelical purity. In the first days of the siege and the possession of Antioch, the Franks

consumed with wanton and thoughtless prodigality the frugal subsistence of weeks and months : the desolate country no longer yielded a supply ; and from that country they were at length excluded by the arms of the besieging Turks. Disease, the faithful companion of want, was envenomed by the rains of the winter, the summer heats, unwholesome food, and the close imprisonment of multitudes. The pictures of famine and pestilence are always the same, and always disgusting ; and our imagination may suggest the nature of their sufferings and their resources. The remains of treasure or spoil were eagerly lavished in the purchase of the vilest nourishment ; and dreadful must have been the calamities of the poor, since, after paying three marks of silver for a goat, and fifteen for a lean camel, the count of Flanders was reduced to beg a dinner, and duke Godfrey to borrow a horse. Sixty thousand horses had been reviewed in the camp : before the end of the siege they were diminished to 2000, and scarcely 200 fit for service could be mustered on the day of battle. Weakness of body, and terror of mind, extinguished the ardent enthusiasm of the pilgrims ; and every motive of honour and religion was subdued by the desire of life. Among the chiefs, three heroes may be found without fear or reproach : Godfrey of Bouillon was supported by his magnanimous piety ; Bohemond by ambition and interest ; and Tancred declared, in the true spirit of chivalry, that as long as he was at the head of forty knights, he would never relinquish the enterprise of Palestine. But the count of Toulouse and Provence was suspected of a voluntary indisposition ; the duke of Normandy was recalled from the sea-shore by the censures of the church ; Hugh the Great, though he led the vanguard of the battle, embraced an ambiguous opportunity of returning to France ; and Stephen count of Chartres basely deserted the standard which he bore, and the council in which he presided. The soldiers were discouraged by the flight of William, viscount of Melun, surnamed the *Carpenter*, from the weighty strokes of his axe ; and the saints were scandalized by the fall of Peter the Hermit, who, after arming Europe against Asia, attempted to escape from the penance of a necessary fast. Of the multitude of recreant warriors, the names (says an historian) are blotted from the book of life ; and the opprobrious epithet of the rope-dancers was applied to the deserters who dropt in the night from the walls of Antioch. The emperor Alexius, who seemed to advance to the succour of the Latins, was dismayed by the assurance of their hopeless condition. They expected their fate in silent despair ; oaths and punishments were tried without effect ; and to rouse the soldiers to the defence of the walls, it was found necessary to set fire to their quarters.

For their salvation and victory, they were indebted to the same fanaticism which had led them to the brink of ruin. In such a cause, and in such an army, visions, prophecies, and miracles, were frequent

and familiar. In the distress of Antioch, they were repeated with unusual energy and success : St. Ambrose had assured a pious ecclesiastic, that two years of trial must precede the season of deliverance and grace ; the deserters were stopped by the presence and reproaches of Christ himself ; the dead had promised to rise and combat with their brethren ; the Virgin had obtained the pardon of their sins ; and their confidence was relieved by a visible sign, the seasonable and splendid discovery of the HOLY LANCE. The policy of their chiefs has on this occasion been admired, and might surely be excused ; but a pious fraud is seldom produced by the cool conspiracy of many persons ; and a voluntary impostor might depend on the support of the wise and the credulity of the people. Of the diocese of Marseilles, there was a priest of low cunning and loose manners, and his name was Peter Bartholemy. He presented himself at the door of the council-chamber, to disclose an apparition of St. Andrew, which had been thrice reiterated in his sleep, with a dreadful menace, if he presumed to suppress the commands of heaven. "At Antioch," said the apostle, "in the church of my brother St. Peter, near the high altar, is concealed the steel head of the lance that pierced the side of our Redeemer. In three days, that instrument of eternal, and now of temporal salvation, will be manifested to his disciples. Search and ye shall find ; bear it aloft in battle ; and that mystic weapon shall penetrate the souls of the miscreants." The pope's legate, the bishop of Puy, affected to listen with coldness and distrust ; but the revelation was eagerly accepted by count Raymond, whom his faithful subject, in the name of the apostle, had chosen for the guardian of the holy lance. The experiment was resolved ; and on the third day, after a due preparation of prayer and fasting, the priest of Marseilles introduced twelve trusty spectators, among whom were the count and his chaplain ; and the church-doors were barred against the impetuous multitude. The ground was opened in the appointed place ; but the workmen, who relieved each other, dug to the depth of twelve feet without discovering the object of their search. In the evening, when count Raymond had withdrawn to his post, and the weary assistants began to murmur, Bartholemy, in his shirt, and without his shoes, boldly descended into the pit ; the darkness of the hour and of the place enabled him to secrete and deposit the head of a Saracen lance ; and the first sound, the first gleam, of the steel, was saluted with a devout rapture. The holy lance was drawn from its recess, wrapt in a veil of silk and gold, and exposed to the veneration of the crusaders ; their anxious suspense burst forth in a general shout of joy and hope, and the desponding troops were again inflamed with the enthusiasm of valour. Whatever had been the arts, and whatever might be the sentiments, of the chiefs, they skilfully improved this fortunate revolution by every aid that discipline and devotion

could afford. The soldiers were dismissed to their quarters with an injunction to fortify their minds and bodies for the approaching conflict, freely to bestow their last pittance on themselves and their horses, and to expect with the dawn of day the signal of victory. On the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, the gates of Antioch were thrown open ; a martial psalm, "Let the Lord arise, and let his enemies be scattered !" was chaunted by a procession of priests and monks ; the battle-array was marshalled in twelve divisions, in honour of the twelve apostles ; and the holy lance, in the absence of Raymond, was entrusted to the hands of his chaplain. The influence of this relic or trophy was felt by the servants, and perhaps by the enemies of Christ ; and its potent energy was heightened by an accident, a stratagem, or a rumour, of a miraculous complexion. Three knights, in white garments and resplendent arms, either issued, or seemed to issue, from the hills : the voice of Adhemar, the pope's legate, proclaimed them as the martyrs St. George, St. Theodore, and St. Maurice ; the tumult of battle allowed no time for doubt or scrutiny ; and the welcome apparition dazzled the eyes or the imagination of a fanatic army. In the season of danger and triumph, the revelation of Bartholemey of Marseilles was unanimously asserted ; but as soon as the temporary service was accomplished, the personal dignity and liberal alms which the count of Toulouse derived from the custody of the holy lance, provoked the envy, and awakened the reason, of his rivals. A Norman clerk presumed to sift, with a philosophic spirit, the truth of the legend, the circumstances of the discovery, and the character of the prophet ; and the pious Bohemond ascribed their deliverance to the merits and intercession of Christ alone. For a while, the Provincials defended their national palladium with clamours and arms ; and new visions condemned to death and hell the profane sceptics, who presumed to scrutinise the truth and merit of the discovery. The prevalence of incredulity compelled the author to submit his life and veracity to the judgment of God. A pile of dry faggots, four feet high, and fourteen long, was erected in the midst of the camp ; the flames burnt fiercely to the elevation of thirty cubits ; and a narrow path of twelve inches was left for the perilous trial. The unfortunate priest of Marseilles traversed the fire with dexterity and speed ; but his thighs and belly were scorched by the intense heat ; he expired the next day ; and the logic of believing minds will pay some regard to his dying protestations of innocence and truth. Some efforts were made by the Provincials to substitute a cross, a ring, or a tabernacle, in the place of the holy lance, which soon vanished in contempt and oblivion. Yet the revelation of Antioch is gravely asserted by succeeding historians ; and such is credulity, that miracles most doubtful on the spot and at the moment, will be received with implicit faith at a convenient distance of time and space.

The prudence or fortune of the Franks had delayed their invasion till the decline of the Turkish empire. Under the manly government of the three first sultans, the kingdoms of Asia were united in peace and justice ; and the innumerable armies which they led in person were equal in courage, and superior in discipline, to the Barbarians of the West. But at the time of the crusade, the inheritance of Malek Shaw was disputed by his four sons ; their private ambition was insensible of the public danger ; and, in the vicissitudes of their fortune, the royal vassals were ignorant, or regardless, of the true object of their allegiance. The twenty-eight emirs, who marched with the standard of Kerboga, were his rivals or enemies ; their hasty levies were drawn from the towns and tents of Mesopotamia and Syria ; and the Turkish veterans were employed or consumed in the civil wars beyond the Tigris. The caliph of Egypt embraced this opportunity of weakness and discord, to recover his ancient possessions ; and his sultan Aphdal besieged Jerusalem and Tyre, expelled the children of Ortok, and restored in Palestine the civil and ecclesiastical authority of the Fatimites. They heard with astonishment of the vast armies of Christians that had passed from Europe to Asia, and rejoiced in the sieges and battles which broke the power of the Turks, the adversaries of their sect and monarchy. But the same Christians were the enemies of the prophet ; and from the overthrow of Nice and Antioch, the motive of their enterprise, which was gradually understood, would urge them forwards to the banks of the Jordan, or perhaps of the Nile. An intercourse of epistles and embassies, which rose and fell with the events of war, was maintained between the throne of Cairo and the camp of the Latins ; and their adverse pride was the result of ignorance and enthusiasm. The ministers of Egypt declared in an haughty, or insinuated in a milder, tone, that their sovereign, the true and lawful commander of the faithful, had rescued Jerusalem from the Turkish yoke ; and that the pilgrims, if they would divide their numbers, and lay aside their arms, should find a safe and hospitable reception at the sepulchre of Jesus. In the belief of their lost condition, the caliph Mostali despised their arms, and imprisoned their deputies : the conquest and victory of Antioch prompted him to solicit those formidable champions with gifts of horses and silk robes, of vases, and purses of gold and silver ; and in his estimate of their merit or power, the first place was assigned to Bohemond, and the second to Godfrey. In either fortune the answer of the crusaders was firm and uniform : they disdained to inquire into the private claims or possessions of the followers of Mahomet : whatsoever was his name or nation, the usurper of Jerusalem was their enemy ; and instead of prescribing the mode and terms of their pilgrimage, it was only by a timely surrender of the city and province, their sacred right, that he could deserve their alliance, or deprecate their impending and irresistible attack.

Yet this attack, when they were within the view and reach of their glorious prize, was suspended (A.D. 1098, July—A.D. 1099, May) above ten months after the defeat of Kerboga. The zeal and courage of the crusaders were chilled in the moment of victory: and, instead of marching to improve the consternation, they hastily dispersed to enjoy the luxury, of Syria. The causes of this strange delay may be found in the want of strength and subordination. In the painful and various service of Antioch, the cavalry was annihilated; many thousands of every rank had been lost by famine, sickness, and desertion: the same abuse of plenty had been productive of a third famine; and the alternative of intemperance and distress, had generated a pestilence, which swept away above 50,000 of the pilgrims. Few were able to command, and none were willing to obey: the domestic feuds, which had been stifled by common fear, were again renewed in acts, or at least in sentiments, of hostility; the fortune of Baldwin and Bohemond excited the envy of their companions; the bravest knights were enlisted for the defence of their new principalities; and count Raymond exhausted his troops and treasures in an idle expedition into the heart of Syria. The winter was consumed in discord and disorder; a sense of honour and religion was rekindled in the spring; and the private soldiers, less susceptible of ambition and jealousy, awakened with angry clamours the indolence of their chiefs. In the month of May, (A.D. 1099. May 13), the relics of this mighty host proceeded from Antioch to Laodicea; about 40,000 Latins, of whom no more than 1500 horse, and 20,000 foot, were capable of immediate service. Their easy march was continued between mount Libanus and the sea-shore; their wants were liberally supplied by the coasting traders of Genoa and Pisa; and they drew large contributions from the emirs of Tripoli, Tyre, Sidon, Acre, and Cæsarea, who granted a free passage, and promised to follow the example of Jerusalem. From Cæsarea they advanced into the midland country; their clerks recognized the sacred geography of Lydda, Ramla, Emaus, and Bethlem, and as soon (June 6) as they descried the holy city, the crusaders forgot their toils and claimed their reward.

Jerusalem has derived some reputation from the number and importance of her memorable sieges. It was not till after a long and obstinate contest that Babylon and Rome could prevail against the obstinacy of the people, the craggy ground that might supersede the necessity of fortifications, and the walls and towers that would have fortified the most accessible plain. These obstacles were diminished in the age of the crusades. The bulwarks had been completely destroyed and imperfectly restored: the Jews, their nation and worship, were for ever banished; but nature is less changeable than man, and the site of Jerusalem, though somewhat softened and somewhat removed, was still strong against the assaults of an enemy. By the ex-

perience of a recent siege, and a three years' possession, the Saracens of Egypt had been taught to discern, and in some degree to remedy, the defects of a place, which religion as well as honour forbade them to resign. Aladin or Iftikhar, the caliph's lieutenant, was entrusted with the defence : his policy strove to restrain the native Christians by the dread of their own ruin and that of the holy sepulchre ; to animate the Moslems by the assurance of temporal and eternal rewards. His garrison is said to have consisted of 40,000 Turks and Arabians ; and if he could muster 20,000 of the inhabitants, it must be confessed that the besieged were more numerous than the besieging army. Had the diminished strength and numbers of the Latins allowed them to grasp the whole circumference of 4000 yards (about two English miles and a half), to what useful purpose should they have descended into the valley of Ben Himmon and torrent of Cedron, or approached the precipices of the south and east, from whence they had nothing either to hope or fear ? Their siege (A.D. 1099. June 7—July 15) was more reasonably directed against the northern and western sides of the city. Godfrey of Bouillon erected his standard on the first swell of mount Calvary : to the left, as far as St. Stephen's gate, the line of attack was continued by Tancred and the two Roberts ; and count Raymond established his quarters from the citadel to the foot of mount Sion, which was no longer included within the precincts of the city. On the fifth day, the crusaders made a general assault, in the fanatic hope of battering down the walls without engines, and of scaling them without ladders. By the dint of brutal force, they burst the first barrier, but they were driven back with shame and slaughter to the camp : the influence of vision and prophecy was deadened by the too frequent abuse of those pious stratagems ; and time and labour were found to be the only means of victory. The time of the siege was indeed fulfilled in forty days, but they were forty days of calamity and anguish. A repetition of the old complaint of famine may be imputed in some degree to the voracious or disorderly appetite of the Franks ; but the stony soil of Jerusalem is almost destitute of water ; the scanty springs and hasty torrents were dry in the summer season ; nor was the thirst of the besiegers relieved, as in the city, by the artificial supply of cisterns and aqueducts. The circumjacent country is equally destitute of trees for the uses of shade or building ; but some large beams were discovered in a cave by the crusaders : a wood near Sichem, the enchanted grove of Tasso, was cut down : the necessary timber was transported to the camp by the vigour and dexterity of Tancred ; and the engines were framed by some Genoese artists, who had fortunately landed in the harbour of Jaffa. Two movable turrets were constructed at the expence, and in the stations, of the duke of Lorraine and the count of Toulouse, and rolled forwards with devout labour, not to the most accessible, but to the most neglected, parts of the fortification.

Raymond's tower was reduced to ashes by the fire of the besieged, but his colleague was more vigilant and successful ; the enemies were driven by his archers from the rampart ; the draw-bridge was let down ; and on a Friday at three in the afternoon, the day and hour of the Passion, Godfrey of Bouillon stood victorious on the walls of Jerusalem. His example was followed on every side by the emulation of valour ; and about 460 years after the conquest of Omar, the holy city was rescued from the Mahometan yoke. In the pillage of public and private wealth, the adventurers had agreed to respect the exclusive property of the first occupant ; and the spoils of the great mosque, seventy lamps and massy vases of gold and silver, rewarded the diligence, and displayed the generosity, of Tancred. A bloody sacrifice was offered by his mistaken votaries to the God of the Christians : resistance might provoke, but neither age nor sex could mollify, their implacable rage : they indulged themselves three days in a promiscuous massacre ; and the infection of the dead bodies produced an epidemical disease. After 70,000 Moslems had been put to the sword, and the harmless Jews had been burnt in their synagogue, they could still reserve a multitude of captives, whom interest or lassitude persuaded them to spare. Of these savage heroes of the cross, Tancred alone betrayed some sentiments of compassion ; yet we may praise the more selfish lenity of Raymond, who granted a capitulation and safe-conduct to the garrison of the citadel. The holy sepulchre was now free ; and the bloody victors prepared to accomplish their vow. Bare-headed and barefoot, with contrite hearts, and in an humble posture, they ascended the hill of Calvary, amidst the loud anthems of the clergy ; kissed the stone which had covered the Saviour of the world ; and bedewed with tears of joy and penitence the monument of their redemption. This union of the fiercest and most tender passions has been variously considered by two philosophers ; by the one as easy and natural ; by the other as absurd and incredible. Perhaps it is too rigorously applied to the same persons and the same hour : the example of the virtuous Godfrey awakened the piety of his companions ; while they cleansed their bodies, they purified their minds ; nor shall I believe that the most ardent in slaughter and rapine were the foremost in the procession to the holy sepulchre.

Eight days (A.D. 1099. July 23) after this memorable event, which pope Urban did not live to hear, the Latin chiefs proceeded to the election of a king, to guard and govern their conquests in Palestine. Hugh the Great, and Stephen of Chartres, had retired with some loss of reputation, which they strove to regain by a second crusade and an honourable death. Baldwin was established at Edessa, and Bohemond at Antioch, and two Roberts, the duke of Normandy and the count of Flanders, preferred their fair inheritance in the West, to a doubtful competition or a barren sceptre. The jealousy and ambition of Ray-

mond were condemned by his own followers, and the free, the just, the unanimous voice of the army, proclaimed Godfrey of Bouillon the first and most worthy of the champions of Christendom. His magnanimity accepted a trust as full of danger as of glory; but in a city where his Saviour had been crowned with thorns, the devout pilgrim rejected the name and ensigns of royalty; and the founder of the kingdom of Jerusalem contented himself with the modest title of Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulchre. His government of a single year (A.D. 1100. July 18), too short for the public happiness, was interrupted in the first fortnight by a summons to the field by the approach of the vizier or sultan of Egypt, who had been too slow to prevent, but who was impatient to avenge, the loss of Jerusalem. His total overthrow in the battle of Ascalon (A.D. 1099. Aug. 12) sealed the establishment of the Latins in Syria, and signalized the valour of the French princes, who in this action bade a long farewell to the holy wars. Some glory might be derived from the prodigious inequality of numbers, though I shall not count the myriads of horse and foot on the side of the Fatimites; but, except 3000 Ethiopians or blacks, who were armed with flails, or scourges of iron, the Barbarians of the South fled on the first onset, and afforded a pleasing comparison between the active valour of the Turks and the sloth and effeminacy of the natives of Egypt. After suspending before the holy sepulchre the sword and standard of the sultan, the new king (he deserves the title) embraced his departing companions, and could retain only with the gallant Tancred 300 knights, and 2000 foot soldiers, for the defence of Palestine. His sovereignty was soon attacked by a new enemy, the only one against whom Godfrey was a coward. Adhemar, bishop of Puy, who excelled both in council and action, had been swept away in the last plague of Antioch: the remaining ecclesiastics preserved only the pride and avarice of their character; and their seditious clamours had required that the choice of a bishop should precede that of a king. The revenue and jurisdiction of the lawful patriarch were usurped by the Latin clergy: the exclusion of the Greeks and Syrians was justified by the reproach of heresy or schism; and, under the iron yoke of their deliverers, the Oriental Christians regretted the tolerating government of the Arabian caliphs. Daimbert, archbishop of Pisa, had long been trained in the secret policy of Rome: he brought a fleet of his countrymen to the succour of the Holy Land, and was installed, without a competitor, the spiritual and temporal head of the church. The new patriarch immediately grasped the sceptre which had been acquired by the toil and blood of the victorious pilgrims; and both Godfrey and Bohemond submitted to receive at his hands the investiture of their feudal possessions. Nor was this sufficient; Daimbert claimed the immediate property of Jerusalem and Jaffa: instead of a firm and generous refusal, the hero negotiated with the priest; a quarter of

either city was ceded to the church ; and the modest bishop was satisfied with an eventual reversion of the rest, on the death of Godfrey without children, or on the future acquisition of a new seat at Cairo or Damascus.

Without this indulgence, the conqueror would have almost been stripped of his infant kingdom (A.D. 1099—1187) which consisted only of Jerusalem and Jaffa, with about twenty villages and towns of the adjacent country. Within this narrow verge, the Mahometans were still lodged in some impregnable castles ; and the husbandman, the trader, and the pilgrims, were exposed to daily and domestic hostility. By the arms of Godfrey himself, and of the two Baldwins, his brother and cousin, who succeeded to the throne, the Latins breathed with more ease and safety ; and at length they equalled, in the extent of their dominions, though not in the millions of their subjects, the ancient princes of Judah and Israel.* After the reduction of the maritime cities of Laodicea, Tripoli, Tyre, and Ascalon, which were powerfully assisted by the fleets of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, and even of Flanders and Norway, the range of sea-coast from Scanderoon to the borders of Egypt was possessed by the Christian pilgrims. If the prince of Antioch disclaimed his supremacy, the counts of Edessa and Tripoli owned themselves the vassals of the king of Jerusalem : the Latins reigned beyond the Euphrates ; and the four cities of Hems, Hamah, Damascus and Aleppo, were the only relics of the Mahometan conquests in Syria. The laws and language, the manners and titles, of the French nation and Latin church, were introduced into these transmarine colonies. According to the feudal jurisprudence, the principal states and subordinate baronies descended in the line of male and female succession ; but the children of the first conquerors, a motley and degenerate race, were dissolved by the luxury of the climate ; the arrival of new crusaders from Europe, was a doubtful hope, and a casual event. The service of the feudal tenures was performed by 666 knights, who might expect the aid of 200 more under the banner of the count of Tripoli ; and each knight was attended to the field by four squires or archers on horseback. Five thousand and seventy-five *sergeants*, most probably foot soldiers, were supplied by the churches and cities : and the whole legal militia of the kingdom could not exceed 11,000 men, a slender defence against the surrounding myriads of Saracens and Turks. But the firmest bulwark of Jerusalem was founded on the knights of the hospital of St. John, and of the temple of Solomon ; on the strange association of a monastic and military life, which fanaticism might suggest, but which policy must approve. The flower of the nobility of Europe aspired to wear the

* An actual muster, not including the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, gave David an army of 1,300,000, or 1,574,000 fighting men ; which, with the addition of women, children, and slaves, may imply a population of 13,000,000, in a country 60 leagues in length, and 30 broad.

cross, and to profess the vows, of these respectable orders ; their spirit and discipline were immortal ; and the speedy donation of 28,000 farms or manors, enabled them to support a regular force of cavalry and infantry for the defence of Palestine. The austerity of the convent soon evaporated in the exercise of arms : the world was scandalized by the pride, avarice, and corruption of these Christian soldiers ; their claims of immunity and jurisdiction disturbed the harmony of the church and state ; and the public peace was endangered by their jealous emulation. But in their most dissolute period, the knights of the hospital and temple maintained their fearless and fanatic character : they neglected to live, but they were prepared to die, in the service of Christ ; and the spirit of chivalry, the parent and offspring of the crusades, was transplanted by this institution from the holy sepulchre to the isle of Malta.

The spirit of freedom, which pervades the feudal institutions, was felt in its strongest energy by the volunteers of the cross, who elected for their chief the most deserving of his peers. Amidst the slaves of Asia, unconscious of the lesson or example, a model of political liberty was introduced : and the laws of the French kingdom are derived from the purest source of equality and justice. Of such laws, the first and indispensable condition is the assent of those, whose obedience they require, and for whose benefit they are designed. No sooner had Godfrey of Bouillon accepted the office of supreme magistrate than he solicited the public and private advice of the Latin pilgrims, who were the best skilled in the statutes and customs of Europe. From these materials, with the council and approbation of the patriarch and barons, of the clergy and laity, Godfrey composed the *ASSISE OF JERUSALEM*, a precious monument of feudal jurisprudence. The new code, attested by the seals of the king, the patriarch, and the viscount of Jerusalem, was deposited in the holy sepulchre, enriched with the improvements of succeeding times, and respectfully consulted as often as any doubtful question arose in the tribunals of Palestine. With the kingdom and city, all was lost, the fragments of the written law were preserved (A.D. 1099—1369) by jealous tradition and variable practice till the middle of the thirteenth century : the code was restored by the pen of John d'Ibelin, count of Jaffa, one of the principal feudatories ; and the final revision was accomplished in the year 1369, for the use of the Latin kingdom of Cyprus.

The justice and freedom of the constitution were maintained by two tribunals of unequal dignity, which were instituted by Godfrey of Bouillon after the conquest of Jerusalem. The king, in person, presiding in the upper court, the court of the barons. Of these, the four most conspicuous were the prince of Galilee, the lord of Sidon and Cæsarea, and the counts of Jaffa and Tripoli, who, perhaps with the constable and marshal, were in a special manner the compeers and

judges of each other. But all the nobles, who held their lands immediately of the crown, were entitled and bound to attend the king's court; and each baron exercised a similar jurisdiction in the subordinate assemblies of his own feudatories. The connexion of lord and vassal was honourable and voluntary: reverence was due to the benefactor, protection to the dependent; but they mutually pledged their faith to each other; and the obligation on either side might be suspended by neglect or dissolved by injury. The cognizance of marriages and testaments was blended with religion and usurped by the clergy; but the civil and criminal causes of the nobles, the inheritance and tenure of their fiefs, formed the proper occupation of the supreme court. Each member was the judge and guardian both of public and private rights. It was his duty to assert with his tongue and sword the lawful claims of the lord; but if an unjust superior presumed to violate the freedom or property of a vassal, the confederate peers stood forth to maintain his quarrel by word and deed. They boldly affirmed his innocence and his wrongs; demanded the restitution of his liberty or his lands; suspended, after a fruitless demand, their own service; rescued their brother from prison; and employed every weapon in his defence, without offering direct violence to the person of their lord, which was ever sacred in their eyes. In their pleadings, replies, and rejoinders, the advocates of the court were subtle and copious; but the use of argument and evidence was often superseded by judicial combat; and the Assise of Jerusalem admits in many cases this barbarous institution, which has been slowly abolished by the laws and manners of Europe.

The trial by battle was established in all criminal cases, which affected the life, or limb, or honour, of any person; and in all civil transactions, of or above the value of one mark of silver. It appears, that in criminal cases the combat was the privilege of the accuser, who, except in a charge of treason, avenged his personal injury, or the death of those persons whom he had a right to represent; but wherever, from the nature of the charge, testimony could be obtained, it was necessary for him to produce witnesses of the fact. In civil cases, the combat was not allowed as the means of establishing the claim of the demandant; but he was obliged to produce witnesses who had, or assumed to have, knowledge of the fact. The combat was then the privilege of the defendant; because he charged the witness with an attempt by perjury to take away his right. He came therefore to be in the same situation as the appellant in criminal cases. It was not then as a mode of proof that the combat was received, nor as making negative evidence (according to the supposition of Montesquieu;) but in every case the right to offer battle was founded on the right to pursue by arms the redress of an injury; and the judicial combat was fought on the same principle, and with the same spirit, as

a private duel. Champions were only allowed to women, and to men maimed or past the age of sixty. The consequence of a defeat was death to the person accused, or to the champion or witness, as well as to the accuser himself ; but in civil cases the demandant was punished with infamy and the loss of his suit, while his witness and champion suffered an ignominious death. In many cases it was in the option of the judge to award or to refuse the combat : but two are specified, in which it was the inevitable result of the challenge ; if a faithful vassal gave the lie to his compeer, who unjustly claimed any portion of their lord's demesnes ; or if an unsuccessful suitor presumed to impeach the judgment and veracity of the court. He might impeach them, but the terms were severe and perilous : in the same day he successively fought *all* the members of the tribunal, even those who had been absent : a single defeat was followed by death and infamy ; and where none could hope for victory, it is highly probable that none would adventure the trial. In the Assise of Jerusalem, the legal subtlety of the count of Jaffa is more laudably employed to elude, than to facilitate, the judicial combat, which he derives from a principle of honour rather than of superstition.

Among the causes which enfranchised the plebeians from the yoke of feudal tyranny, the institution of cities and corporations is one of the most powerful ; and if those of Palestine are coeval with the first crusade, they may be ranked with the most ancient of the Latin world. Many of the pilgrims had escaped from their lords under the banner of the cross ; and it was the policy of the French princes to tempt their stay by the assurance of the rights and privileges of freemen. It is expressly declared in the Assise of Jerusalem, that after instituting, for his knights and barons, the court of peers, in which he presided himself, Godfrey of Bouillon established a second tribunal, in which his person was represented by his viscount. The jurisdiction of this inferior court extended over the burgesses of the kingdom ; and it was composed of a select number of the most discreet and worthy citizens, who were sworn to judge, according to the laws, of the actions and fortunes of their equals. In the conquest and settlement of new cities, the example of Jerusalem was imitated by the kings and their great vassals ; and above thirty similar corporations were founded before the loss of the Holy Land. Another class of subjects, the Syrians, or Oriental Christians, were oppressed by the zeal of the clergy, and protected by the toleration of the state. Godfrey listened to their reasonable prayer, that they might be judged by their own national laws. A third court was instituted for their use, of limited and domestic jurisdiction : the sworn members were Syrians, in blood, language, and religion ; but the office of the president (in Arabic, of the *rais*) was sometimes exercised by the viscount of the city. At an immeasurable distance below the *nobles*, the *burgesses*, and the

strangers, the Assise of Jerusalem condescends to mention the *villains* and *slaves*, the peasants of the land and the captives of war, who were almost equally considered as the objects of property. The relief or protection of these unhappy men was not esteemed worthy of the care of the legislator ; but he diligently provides for the recovery, though not indeed for the punishment, of the fugitives. Like hounds, or hawks, who had strayed from the lawful owner, they might be lost and claimed : the slave and falcon were of the same value ; but three slaves, or twelve oxen, were accumulated to equal the price of the war-horse ; and a sum of three hundred pieces of gold was fixed, in the age of chivalry, as the equivalent of the more noble animal.

In a style less grave than that of history, I should perhaps compare the emperor Alexius (A.D. 1097—1118) to the jackall, who is said to follow the steps, and to devour the leavings, of the lion. Whatever had been his fears and toils in the passage of the first crusade, they were amply recompensed by the subsequent benefits which he derived from the exploits of the Franks. His dexterity and vigilance secured their first conquest of Nice ; and from this threatening station the Turks were compelled to evacuate the neighbourhood of Constantinople. While the crusaders, with blind valour, advanced into the mid-land counties of Asia, the crafty Greek improved the favourable occasion when the emirs of the sea-coast were recalled to the standard of the sultan. The Turks were driven from the isles of Rhodes and Chios : the cities of Ephesus and Smyrna, of Sardes, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, were restored to the empire, which Alexius enlarged from the Hellespont to the banks of the Mæander, and the rocky shores of Pamphylia. The churches resumed their splendour ; the towns were rebuilt and fortified ; and the desert country was peopled with colonies of Christians, who were gently removed from the more distant and dangerous frontier. In these paternal cares, we may forgive Alexius, if he forgot the deliverance of the holy sepulchre ; but, by the Latins, he was stigmatized with the foul reproach of treason and desertion. They had sworn fidelity and obedience to his throne ; but *he* had promised to assist their enterprise in person, or, at least, with his troops and treasures ; his base retreat dissolved their obligations ; and the sword, which had been the instrument of their victory, was the pledge and title of their just independence. It does not appear that the emperor attempted to revive his obsolete claims over the kingdom of Jerusalem ; but the borders of Cilicia and Syria were more recent in his possession, and more accessible to his arms. The great army of the crusaders was annihilated or dispersed ; the principality of Antioch was left without a head, by the surprise and captivity of Bohemond : his ransom had oppressed him with a heavy debt ; and his Norman followers were insufficient to repel the hostilities of the Greeks and Turks. In this distress, Bohemond embraced

a magnanimous resolution, of leaving the defence of Antioch to his kinsman, the faithful Tancred ; of arming the West against the Byzantine empire, and of executing the design which he inherited from the lessons and example of his father Guiscard. His embarkation was clandestine : and if we may credit a tale of the princess Anna, he passed the hostile sea, closely secreted in a coffin. But his reception in France was dignified by the public applause, and his marriage with the king's daughter ; his return was glorious, since the bravest spirits of the age enlisted under his veteran command ; and he repassed the Hadriatic at the head of 5,000 horse and 40,000 foot, assembled from the most remote climates of Europe. The strength of Durazzo, and prudence of Alexius, the progress of famine, and approach of winter, eluded his ambitious hopes ; and the venal confederates were seduced from his standard. A treaty of peace suspended the fears of the Greeks ; and they were finally delivered by the death of an adversary, whom neither oaths could bind, nor dangers could appal, nor prosperity could satiate. His children succeeded to the principality of Antioch : but the boundaries were strictly defined, the homage was clearly stipulated, and the cities of Tarsus and Malmistra were restored to the Byzantine emperors. Of the coast of Anatolia, they possessed the entire circuit from Trebizond to the Syrian gates. The Seljukian dynasty of Roum was separated on all sides from the sea and their Mussulman brethren ; the power of the sultans was shaken by the victories, and even the defeats, of the Franks ; and after the loss of Nice, they removed their throne to Cogni or Iconium, an obscure and inland town above 300 miles from Constantinople. Instead of trembling for their capital, the Comnenian princes waged an offensive war against the Turks, and the first crusade prevented the fall of the declining empire.

In the twelfth century, three great emigrations marched by land from the West to the relief of Palestine. The soldiers and pilgrims of Lombardy, France, and Germany, were excited by the example and success of the first crusade (A.D. 1101). Forty-eight years (A.D. 1147) after the deliverance of the holy sepulchre, the emperor and the French king, Conrad the third and Louis the seventh, undertook the second crusade to support the falling fortunes of the Latins. A grand division of the third crusade was led (A.D. 1189) by the emperor Frederic Barbarossa, who sympathized with his brothers of France and England in the common loss of Jerusalem. These three expeditions may be compared in their resemblance of the greatness of numbers, their passage through the Greek empire, and the nature and event of their Turkish warfare, and a brief parallel may save the repetition of a tedious narrative. However splendid it may seem, a regular story of the crusades would exhibit the perpetual return of the same causes and effects ; and the frequent attempts for the defence or recovery of

the Holy Land, would appear so many faint and unsuccessful copies of the original.

I. Of the swarms that so closely trod in the footsteps of the first pilgrims, the chiefs were equal in rank, though unequal in fame and merit, to Godfrey of Bouillon and his fellow-adventurers. At their head were displayed the banners of the dukes of Burgundy, Bavaria, and Aquitaine : the first a descendant of Hugh Capet, the second a father of the Brunswick line : the archbishop of Milan, a temporal prince, transported, for the benefit of the Turks, the treasures and ornaments of his church and palace ; and the veteran crusaders, Hugh the Great and Stephen of Chartres, returned to consummate their unfinished vow. The huge and disorderly bodies of their followers moved forwards in two columns ; and if the first consisted of 260,000 persons, the second might possibly amount to 60,000 horse, and 100,000 foot. The armies of the second crusade might have claimed the conquest of Asia : the nobles of France and Germany were animated by the presence of their sovereigns ; and both the rank and personal characters of Conrad and Louis, gave a dignity to their cause, and a discipline to their force, which might be vainly expected from the feudatory chiefs. The cavalry of the emperor, and that of the king, was each composed of 70,000 knights and their immediate attendants in the field ; and if the light-armed troops, the peasant infantry, the women and children, the priests and monks, be rigorously excluded, the full account will scarcely be satisfied with 400,000 souls. The West, from Rome to Britain, was called into action ; the king of Poland and Bohemia obeyed the summons of Conrad ; and it is affirmed by the Greeks and Latins, that in the passage of a strait or river, the Byzantine agents, after a tale of 900,000, desisted from the endless and formidable computation. In the third crusade, as the French and English preferred the navigation of the Mediterranean, the host of Frederic Barbarossa was less numerous. Fifteen thousand knights, and as many squires, were the flower of the German chivalry : 60,000 horse, and 100,000 foot, were mustered by the emperor in the plains of Hungary ; and after such repetitions we shall no longer be startled at the 600,000 pilgrims, which credulity has ascribed to this last emigration. Such extravagant reckonings prove only the astonishment of contemporaries ; but their astonishment most strongly bears testimony to the existence of an enormous though indefinite multitude. The Greeks might applaud their superior knowledge of the arts and stratagems of war, but they confessed the strength and courage of the French cavalry and the infantry of the Germans ; and the strangers are described as an iron race, of gigantic stature, who darted fire from their eyes, and spilt blood like water on the ground. Under the banners of Conrad, a troop of females rode in the attitude and armour of men ; and the chief of these Amazons, from her gilt spurs and buskins, obtained the epithet of the Golden-footed Dame.

II. The numbers and character of the strangers was an object of terror to the effeminate Greeks, and the sentiment of fear is nearly allied to that of hatred. This aversion was suspended or softened by the apprehension of the Turkish power; and the invectives of the Latins will not bias our more candid belief, that the emperor Alexius dissembled their insolence, eluded their hostilities, counselled their rashness, and opened to their ardour the road of pilgrimage and conquest. But when the Turks had been driven from Nice and the sea coast, when the Byzantine princes no longer dreaded the distant sultans of Cogni, they felt with purer indignation the free and frequent passage of the Western Barbarians, who violated the majesty, and endangered the safety, of the empire. The second and third crusades were undertaken under the reign of Manuel Comnenus and Isaac Angelus. Of the former, the passions were always impetuous, and often malevolent; and the natural union of a cowardly and a mischievous temper was exemplified in the latter, who, without merit or mercy, could punish a tyrant, and occupy his throne. It was secretly, and perhaps tacitly, resolved by the prince and people to destroy, or at least to discourage, the pilgrims, by every species of injury and oppression; and their want of prudence and discipline continually afforded the pretence or the opportunity. The Western monarchs had stipulated a safe passage and fair market in the country of their Christian brethren; the treaty had been ratified by oaths and hostages; and the poorest soldier of Frederic's army was furnished with three marks of silver to defray his expences on the road. But every engagement was violated by treachery and injustice; and the complaints of the Latins are attested by the honest confession of a Greek historian, who has dared to prefer truth to his country. Instead of an hospitable reception, the gates of the cities, both in Europe and Asia, were closely barred against the crusaders; and the scanty pittance of food was let down in baskets from the walls. Experience or foresight might excuse this timid jealousy; but the common duties of humanity prohibited the mixture of chalk, or other poisonous ingredients, in the bread; and should Manuel be acquitted of any foul connivance, he is guilty of coining base money for the purpose of trading with the pilgrims. In every step of their march they were stopped or misled: the governors had private orders to fortify the passes and break down the bridges against them: the stragglers were pillaged and murdered: the soldiers and horses were pierced in the woods by arrows from an invisible hand; the sick were burnt in their beds: and the dead bodies were hung on gibbets along the highways. These injuries exasperated the champions of the cross, who were not endowed with evangelical patience; and the Byzantine princes, who had provoked the unequal conflict, promoted the embarkation and march of these formidable guests. On the verge of the Turkish frontier Barbarossa spared the

guilty Philadelphia, rewarded the hospitable Laodicea, and deplored the hard necessity that had stained his sword with any drops of Christian blood. In their intercourse with the monarchs of Germany and France, the pride of the Greeks was exposed to an anxious trial. They might boast that on the first interview the seat of Louis was a low stool, beside the throne of Manuel; but no sooner had the French king transported his army beyond the Bosphorus, than he refused the offer of a second conference, unless his brother would meet him on equal terms, either on the sea or land. With Conrad and Frederic, the ceremonial was still nicer and more difficult: like the successors of Constantine, they styled themselves emperors of the Romans; and firmly maintained the purity of their title and dignity. The first of these representatives of Charlemagne would only converse with Manuel on horseback in the open field; the second, by passing the Hellespont rather than the Bosphorus, declined the view of Constantinople and its sovereign. An emperor, who had been crowned at Rome, was reduced in the Greek epistles to the humble appellation of *Rex*, or prince of the Alemanni; and the vain and feeble Angelus affected to be ignorant of the name of one of the greatest men and monarchs of the age. While they viewed with hatred and suspicion the Latin pilgrims, the Greek emperors maintained a strict, though secret, alliance with the Turks and Saracens. Isaac Angelus complained, that by his friendship for the great Saladin he had incurred the enmity of the Franks; and a mosque was founded at Constantinople for the public exercise of the religion of Mahomet.*

III. The swarms that followed the first crusade, were destroyed in Anatolia by famine, pestilence, and the Turkish arrows: and the princes only escaped with some squadrons of horse to accomplish their lamentable pilgrimage. A just opinion may be formed of their knowledge and humanity; of their knowledge, from the design of subduing Persia and Chorasán in their way to Jerusalem; of their humanity, from the massacre of the Christian people, a friendly city, who came out to meet them with palms and crosses in their hands. The arms of Conrad and Louis were less cruel and imprudent; but the event of the second crusade was still more ruinous to Christendom; and the Greek Manuel is accused by his own subjects of giving seasonable intelligence to the sultan, and treacherous guides to the Latin princes. Instead of crushing the common foe, by a double attack at the same time but on different sides, the Germans were urged by emulation, and the French were retarded by jealousy. Louis had scarcely passed the Bosphorus when he was met by the returning emperor, who had lost the greatest part of his army in glorious, but unsuccessful, actions on the banks of the Mæander. The contrast of the pomp of his rival

* In the Epist. of Innoc. III. (xiii. 184), and the Hist. of Bohadin (p. 129), see the views of a pope and a cadi on this singular toleration.

hastened the retreat of Conrad : the desertion of his independent vassals reduced him to his hereditary troops ; and he borrowed some Greek vessels to execute by sea the pilgrimage of Palestine. Without studying the lessons of experience, or the nature of war, the king of France advanced through the same country to a similar fate. The vanguard, which bore the royal banner and the *oriflamme* of St. Denys,* had doubled their march with rash and inconsiderate speed ; and the rear which the king commanded in person no longer found their companions in the evening camp. In darkness and disorder they were encompassed, assaulted, and overwhelmed by the innumerable host of Turks, who in the art of war were superior to the Christians of the twelfth century. Louis, who climbed a tree in the general discomfiture, was saved by his own valour and the ignorance of his adversaries ; and with the dawn of day he escaped alive, but almost alone, to the camp of the vanguard. But instead of pursuing his expedition by land, he was rejoiced to shelter the relics of his army in the friendly seaport of Satalia. From thence he embarked for Antioch ; but so penurious was the supply of Greek vessels, that they could only afford room for his knights and nobles ; and the plebeian crowd of infantry was left to perish at the foot of the Pamphylian hills. The emperor and the king embraced and wept at Jerusalem ; their martial trains, the remnant of mighty armies, were joined to the Christian powers of Syria, and a fruitless siege of Damascus was the final effort of the second crusade. Conrad and Louis embarked for Europe with the personal fame of piety and courage ; but the Orientals had braved these potent monarchs of the Franks, with whose names and military forces they had been so often threatened. Perhaps they had still more to fear from the veteran genius of Frederic the first, who in his youth had served in Asia, under his uncle Conrad. Forty campaigns in Germany and Italy had taught Barbarossa to command ; and his soldiers, even the princes of the empire, were accustomed under his reign to obey. As soon as he lost sight of Philadelphia and Laodicea, the last cities of the Greek frontier, he plunged into the salt and barren desert, a land (says the historian) of horror and tribulation. During twenty days, every step of his fainting and sickly march was besieged by the innumerable hordes of Turkmans, whose numbers and fury seemed after each defeat to multiply and inflame. The emperor continued to struggle and to suffer ; and such was the measure of his calamities, that when he reached the gates of Iconium, no more than 1000 knights were able to serve on horseback. By a sudden and resolute assault, he defeated the guards, and stormed the capital of the sultan, who humbly sued for pardon and peace. The road was

* As counts of Vexin, the kings of France were the vassals and advocates of the monastery of St. Denys. The saint's peculiar banner, which they received from the abbot, was of a square form, and a red or *flaming* colour. The *oriflamme* appeared at the head of the French armies from the xiith to the xvth century.


now open, and Frederic advanced in a career of triumph, till he was unfortunately drowned in a petty torrent of Cilicia. The remainder of his Germans was consumed by sickness and desertion ; and the emperor's son expired with the greatest part of his Swabian vassals at the siege of Acre. Among the Latin heroes, Godfrey of Bouillon and Frederic Barbarossa alone could achieve the passage of the Lesser Asia ; yet even their success was a warning ; and in the last and most experienced age of the crusades, every nation preferred the sea to the toils and perils of an inland expedition.

The enthusiasm of the first crusade is a natural and simple event, while hope was fresh, danger untried, and enterprise congenial to the spirit of the times. But the obstinate perseverance of Europe may indeed excite our pity and admiration ; that no instruction should have been drawn from constant and adverse experience ; that the same confidence should have repeatedly grown from the same failures ; that six succeeding generations should have rushed headlong down the precipice that was open before them ; and that men of every condition should have staked their public and private fortunes, on the desperate adventure of possessing or recovering a tomb-stone 2000 miles from their country. In a period of two centuries after the council of Clermont, each spring and summer produced a new emigration of pilgrim warriors for the defence of the Holy Land ; but the seven great armaments or crusades were excited by some impending or recent calamity : the nations were moved by the authority of their pontiffs, and the example of their kings : their zeal was kindled, and their reason was silenced, by the voice of their holy orators ; and among these, Bernard, the monk, or the saint, may claim (A.D. 1091—1153) the most honourable place. About eight years before the first conquest of Jerusalem, he was born of a noble family, in Burgundy ; at the age of three-and-twenty, he buried himself in the monastery of Citeaux, then in the primitive fervour of the institution ; at the end of two years he led forth her third colony, or daughter, to the valley of Clairvaux in Champagne ; and was content, till the hour of his death, with the humble station of Abbot of his own community. A philosophic age has abolished, with too liberal and indiscriminate disdain, the honours of these spiritual heroes. The meanest among them are distinguished by some energies of the mind ; they were at least superior to their votaries and disciples ; and, in the race of superstition, they attained the prize for which such numbers contended. In speech, in writing, in action, Bernard stood high above his rivals and contemporaries ; his compositions are not devoid of wit and eloquence ; and he seems to have preserved as much reason and humanity as may be reconciled with the character of a saint. In secular life, he would have shared the seventh part of a private inheritance ; by a vow of poverty and penance, by closing his eyes against the visible world, by the refusal of

all ecclesiastical dignities, the abbot of Clairvaux became the oracle of Europe, and the founder of one hundred and sixty convents. Princes and pontiffs trembled at the freedom of his apostolical censures ; France, England, and Milan, consulted and obeyed his judgment in a schism of the church : the debt was repaid by the gratitude of Innocent the second ; and his successor Eugenius the third was the friend and disciple of the holy Bernard. It was in the proclamation of the second crusade that he shone as the missionary and prophet of God, who called the nations to the defence of his holy sepulchre. At the parliament of Vezelay he spoke before the king ; and Louis the seventh, with his nobles, received their crosses from his hand. The abbot of Clairvaux then marched to the less easy conquest of the emperor Conrad : a phlegmatic people, ignorant of his language, was transported by the pathetic vehemence of his tone and gestures ; and his progress, from Constance to Cologne, was the triumph of eloquence and zeal. Bernard applauds his own success in the depopulation of Europe ; affirms that cities and castles were emptied of their inhabitants ; and computes, that only one man was left behind for the consolation of seven widows. The blind fanatics were desirous of electing him for their general ; but the example of the hermit Peter was before his eyes ; and while he assured the Crusaders of the divine favour, he prudently declined a military command, in which failure and victory would have been almost equally disgraceful to his character. Yet, after the calamitous event, the abbot of Clairvaux was loudly accused as a false prophet, the author of the public and private mourning ; his enemies exulted, his friends blushed, and his apology was slow and unsatisfactory. He justifies his obedience to the commands of the pope ; expatiates on the mysterious ways of providence ; imputes the misfortunes of the pilgrims to their own sins ; and modestly insinuates, that his mission had been approved by signs and wonders. Had the fact been certain, the argument would be decisive ; and his faithful disciples, who enumerate twenty or thirty miracles in a day, appeal to the public assemblies of France and Germany, in which they were performed. At the present hour, such prodigies will not obtain credit beyond the precincts of Clairvaux ; but in the preternatural cures of the blind, the lame, and the sick, who were presented to the man of God, it is impossible for us to ascertain the separate shares of accident, of fancy, of imposture, and of fiction.

Omnipotence itself cannot escape the murmurs of its discordant votaries ; since the same dispensation which was applauded as a deliverance in Europe, was deplored, and perhaps arraigned, as a calamity in Asia. After the loss of Jerusalem, the Syrian fugitives diffused their consternation and sorrow : Bagdad mourned in the dust ; the cadî Zeineddin of Damascus tore his beard in the caliph's presence ; and the whole divan shed tears at his melancholy tale. But the com-

manders of the faithful could only weep ; they were themselves captives in the hands of the Turks ; some temporal power was restored to the last age of the Abbassides ; but their humble ambition was confined to Bagdad and the adjacent province. Their tyrants, the Seljukian sultans, had followed the common law of the Asiatic dynasties, the unceasing round of valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decay : their spirit and power were unequal to the defence of religion ; and, in his distant realm of Persia, the Christians were strangers to the name and the arms of Sangier, the last hero of his race. While the sultans were involved in the silken web of the harem, the pious task was undertaken by their slaves, the Atabeks ; a Turkish name, which, like the Byzantine patricians, may be translated by Father of the Prince. Ascansar, a valiant Turk, had been the favourite of Malek Shaw, from whom he received the privilege of standing on the right-hand of the throne ; but, in the civil wars that ensued on the monarch's death, he lost his head and the government of Aleppo. His domestic emirs persevered in their attachment to his son Zenghi (A.D. 1127—1145), who proved his first arms against the Franks in the defeat of Antioch : thirty campaigns in the service of the caliph and sultan established his military fame ; and he was invested with the command of Mosul, as the only champion that could avenge the cause of the prophet. The public hope was not disappointed : after a siege of twenty-five days, he stormed the city of Edessa, and recovered from the Franks their conquests beyond the Euphrates : the martial tribes of Curdistan were subdued by the independent sovereign of Mosul and Aleppo : his soldiers were taught to behold the camp as their only country ; they trusted to his liberality for their rewards ; and their absent families were protected by the vigilance of Zenghi. At the head of these veterans, his son Nouredin gradually (A.D. 1145—1174) united the Mahometan powers ; added the kingdom of Damascus to that of Aleppo, and waged a long and successful war against the Christians of Syria ; he spread his ample reign from the Tigris to the Nile, and the Abbassides rewarded their faithful servant with all the titles and prerogatives of royalty. The Latins themselves were compelled to own the wisdom and courage, and even the justice and piety, of this implacable adversary. In his life and government, the holy warrior revived the zeal and simplicity of the first caliphs. Gold and silk were banished from his palace ; the use of wine from his dominions ; the public revenue was scrupulously applied to the public service ; and the frugal household of Nouredin was maintained from his legitimate share of the spoil, which he vested in the purchase of a private estate. His favourite Sultana sighed for some female object of expence. "Alas," replied the king, "I fear God, and am no more than the treasurer of the Moslems. Their property I cannot alienate ; but I still possess three shops in the city of Hems : these you may take ;



and these alone can I bestow." His chamber of justice was the terror of the great and the refuge of the poor. Some years after the Sultan's death, an oppressed subject called aloud in the streets of Damascus, "O Noureddin, Noureddin, where art thou now? Arise, arise, to pity and protect us!" A tumult was apprehended, and a living tyrant trembled at the name of a departed monarch.

By the arms of the Turks and Franks, the Fatimites had been deprived of Syria. In Egypt, the decay of their character and influence was still more essential. Yet they were still revered as the descendants and successors of the prophet; they maintained their invisible state in the palace of Cairo; and their person was seldom violated by the profane eyes of subjects or strangers. The Latin ambassadors have described their own introduction through a series of gloomy passages and glittering porticoes: the scene was enlivened by the warbling of birds and the murmur of fountains; it was enriched by a display of rich furniture, and rare animals: of the Imperial treasures, something was shown, and much was supposed; and the long order of unfolding doors was guarded by black soldiers and domestic eunuchs. The sanctuary of the presence-chamber was veiled with a curtain; and the vizir, who conducted the ambassadors, laid aside his scymetar, and prostrated himself three times on the ground; the veil was then removed; and they beheld the commander of the faithful, who signified his pleasure to the first slave of the throne. But this slave was his master: the vizirs or sultans had usurped the supreme administration of Egypt; the claims of the rival candidates were decided by arms; and the name of the most worthy, of the strongest, was inserted in the royal patent of command. The factions of Dargham and Shower alternately expelled each other from the capital and country; and the weaker side implored the dangerous protection of the sultan of Damascus or the king of Jerusalem, the perpetual enemies of the sect and monarchy of the Fatimites. By his arms and religion, the Turk was most formidable; but the [Frank, in an easy direct march, could advance from Gaza to the Nile; while the intermediate situation of his realm compelled the troops of Noureddin to wheel round the skirts of Arabia, a long and painful circuit, which exposed them to thirst, fatigue, and the burning winds of the desert. The secret zeal and ambition of the Turkish prince aspired to reign in Egypt under the name of the Abbassides; but the restoration of the suppliant Shower was the ostensible motive of the first expedition; and the success was (A.D. 1163) entrusted to the emir Shiracouh, a valiant and veteran commander. Dargham was oppressed and slain; but the ingratitude, the jealousy, the just apprehensions, of his more fortunate rival, soon provoked him to invite the king of Jerusalem to deliver Egypt from his insolent benefactors. To this union, the forces of Shiracouh were unequal; he relinquished the premature conquest;

and the evacuation of Belbeis or Pelusium was the condition of his safe retreat. As the Turks defiled before the enemy, and their general closed the rear, with a vigilant eye, and a battle-axe in his hand, a Frank presumed to ask him if he were not afraid of an attack? "It is doubtless in your power to begin the attack," replied the intrepid emir; "but rest assured, that not one of my soldiers will go to paradise till he has sent an infidel to hell." His report of the riches of the land, the effeminacy of the natives, and the disorders of the government, revived the hopes of Noureddin; the caliph of Bagdad applauded the pious design; and Shiracouh descended into Egypt a second time with 12,000 Turks and 11,000 Arabs. Yet his forces were still inferior to the confederate armies of the Franks and Saracens; and I can discern an unusual degree of military art, in his passage of the Nile, his retreat into Thebais, his masterly evolutions in the battle of Babain, the surprise of Alexandria, and his marches and counter-marches in the flats and valley of Egypt, from the tropic to the sea. His conduct was seconded by the courage of his troops, and on the eve of action a Mameluke exclaimed, "If we cannot wrest Egypt from the Christian dogs, why do we not renounce the honours and rewards of the sultan, and retire to labour with the peasants, or to spin with the females of the harem?" Yet, after all his efforts in the field, after the obstinate defence of Alexandria by his nephew Saladin, an honorable capitulation and retreat concluded the second enterprise of Shiracouh; and Noureddin reserved his abilities for a third and more propitious occasion. It was soon offered by the ambition and avarice of Almaric or Amaury, king of Jerusalem, who had imbibed the pernicious maxim, that no faith should be kept with the enemies of God. A religious warrior, the great master of the hospital, encouraged him to proceed; the emperor of Constantinople either gave, or promised, a fleet to act with the armies of Syria; and the perfidious Christian, unsatisfied with spoil and subsidy, aspired to the conquest of Egypt. In this emergency, the Moslems turned their eyes towards the sultan of Damascus; the vizir, whom danger encompassed on all sides, yielded to their unanimous wishes, and Noureddin seemed to be tempted by the fair offer of one third of the revenue of the kingdom. The Franks were already at the gates of Cairo; but the suburbs, the old city, were burnt on their approach; they were deceived by an insidious negotiation; and their vessels were unable to surmount the barriers of the Nile. They prudently declined a contest with the Turks, in the midst of an hostile country; and Amaury retired into Palestine, with the shame and reproach that always adhere to unsuccessful injustice. After this deliverance, Shiracouh was invested (A.D. 1169) with a robe of honour, which he soon stained with the blood of the unfortunate Shawer. For a while, the Turkish emirs condescended to hold the office of vizir; but this foreign

conquest precipitated the fall of the Fatimites themselves ; and the bloodless change was accomplished by a message and a word. The caliphs had been degraded by their own weakness and the tyranny of the vizirs : their subjects blushed, when the descendant and successor of the prophet presented his naked hand to the rude gripe of a Latin ambassador ; they wept when he sent the hair of his women, a sad emblem of their grief and terror, to excite the pity of the sultan of Damascus. By the command of Nouredin (A.D. 1171), and the sentence of the doctors, the holy names of Abubeker, Omar, and Othman, were solemnly restored : the caliph Mosthadi, of Bagdad, was acknowledged in the public prayers as the true commander of the faithful ; and the green livery of the sons of Ali was exchanged for the black colour of the Abbassides. The last of his race, the caliph Adhed, who survived only ten days, expired in happy ignorance of his fate : his treasures secured the loyalty of the soldiers and silenced the murmurs of the sectaries ; and in all subsequent revolutions, Egypt has never departed from the orthodox tradition of the Moslems.

The hilly country beyond the Tigris is occupied by the pastoral tribes of the Curds : a people hardy, strong, savage, impatient of the yoke, addicted to rapine, and tenacious of the government of their national chiefs. The resemblance of name, situation, and manners, seem to identify them with the Carducians of the Greeks ; and they still defend against the Ottoman Porte the antique freedom which they asserted against the successors of Cyrus. Poverty and ambition prompted them to embrace the profession of mercenary soldiers : the service of his father and uncle prepared the reign of the great Saladin (A.D. 1171—1193) ; and the son of Job or Ayub, a simple Kurd, magnanimously smiled at his pedigree, which flattery deduced from the Arabian caliphs. So unconscious was Nouredin of the impending ruin of his house, that he constrained the reluctant youth to follow his uncle Shiracouh into Egypt : his military character was established by the defence of Alexandria ; and if we may believe the Latins, he solicited and obtained from the Christian general the *profane* honours of knighthood. On the death of Shiracouh, the office of grand visir was bestowed on Saladin, as the youngest and least powerful of the emirs ; but with the advice of his father, whom he invited to Cairo, his genius obtained the ascendant over his equals, and attached the army to his person and interest. While Nouredin lived, these ambitious Curds were the most humble of his slaves ; and the indiscreet murmurs of the divan were silenced by the prudent Ayub, who loudly protested that at the command of the sultan he himself would lead his son in chains to the foot of the throne. "Such language," he added in private, "was prudent and proper in an assembly of your rivals ; but we are now above fear and obedience ; and the threats of Nouredin shall not extort the tribute of a sugar-cane."


His seasonable death relieved them from the odious and doubtful conflict : his son, a minor of eleven years of age, was left for a while to the emirs of Damascus ; and the new lord of Egypt was decorated by the caliph with every title that could sanctify his usurpation in the eyes of the people. Nor was Saladin long content with the possession of Egypt : he despoiled the Christians of Jerusalem, and the Atabeks of Damascus, Aleppo, and Diarbekir ; Mecca and Medina acknowledged him for their temporal protector ; his brother subdued the distant regions of Yemen, or the happy Arabia ; and at the hour of his death, his empire was spread from the African Tripoli to the Tigris, and from the Indian ocean to the mountains of Armenia. In the judgment of his character, the reproaches of treason and ingratitude strike forcibly on *our* minds, impressed, as they are, with the principle and experience of law and loyalty. But his ambition may in some measure be excused by the revolutions of Asia, which had erased every notion of legitimate succession ; by the recent example of the Atabeks themselves ; by his reverence to the son of his benefactor, his humane and generous behaviour to the collateral branches ; by *their* incapacity and *his* merit ; by the approbation of the caliph, the sole source of all legitimate power ; and, above all, by the wishes and interests of the people, whose happiness is the first object of government. In *his* virtues, and in those of his patron, they admired the singular union of the hero and the saint ; for both Nouredin and Saladin are ranked among the Mahometan saints ; and the constant meditation of the holy war appears to have shed a serious and sober colour over their lives and actions. The youth of the latter was addicted to wine and women : but his aspiring spirit soon renounced the temptations of pleasure, for the graver follies of fame and dominion ; the garment of Saladin was of coarse woollen ; water was his only drink ; and while he emulated the temperance, he surpassed the chastity, of his Arabian prophet. Both in faith and practice he was a rigid Mussulman ; he ever deplored that the defence of religion had not allowed him to accomplish the pilgrimage of Mecca ; but at the stated hours, five times each day, the sultan devoutly prayed with his brethren : the involuntary omission of fasting was scrupulously repaid ; and his perusal of the Koran on horseback between the approaching armies, may be quoted as a proof, however ostentatious, of piety and courage. The superstitious doctrine of the sect of Shafei was the only study that he deigned to encourage : the poets were safe in his contempt ; but all profane science was the object of his aversion ; and a philosopher, who had vented some speculative novelties, was seized and strangled by the command of the royal saint. The justice of his divan was accessible to the meanest supplicants against himself or his ministers ; and it was only for a kingdom that Saladin would deviate from the rule of equity. While the descendants of Seljuk and Zenghi held his stirrup and

smoothed his garments, he was affable and patient with the meanest of his servants. So boundless was his liberality, that he distributed 12,000 horses at the siege of Acre ; and, at the time of his death, no more than forty-seven drachms of silver, and one piece of gold coin were found in the treasury ; yet in a martial reign, the tributes were diminished, and the wealthy citizens enjoyed without fear or danger, the fruits of their industry. Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, were adorned by the royal foundations of hospitals, colleges, and mosques, and Cairo was fortified with a wall and citadel ; but his works were consecrated to public use, nor did the sultan indulge himself in a garden or palace of private luxury. In a fanatic age, himself a fanatic, the genuine virtues of Saladin commanded the esteem of the Christians : the emperor of Germany gloried in his friendship ; the Greek emperor solicited his alliance ; and the conquest of Jerusalem diffused, and perhaps magnified, his fame both in the East and West.

During its short existence, the kingdom of Jerusalem was supported by the discord of the Turks and Saracens ; and both the Fatimite caliphs and the sultans of Damascus were tempted to sacrifice the cause of their religion to the meaner considerations of private and present advantage. But the powers of Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, were now united by an hero, whom nature and fortune had armed against the Christians. All without now bore the most threatening aspect ; and all was feeble and hollow in the internal state of Jerusalem. After the two first Baldwins, the brother and cousin of Godfrey of Bouillon, the sceptre devolved by female succession to Melisenda, daughter of the second Baldwin, and her husband Fulk, count of Anjou, the father, by a former marriage, of our English Plantagenets. Their two sons, Baldwin the third and Amaury, waged a strenuous, and not unsuccessful, war against the infidels ; but the son of Amaury, Baldwin the fourth, was deprived, by the leprosy, a gift of the crusades, of the faculties both of mind and body. His sister, Sybilla, the mother of Baldwin the fifth, was his natural heiress : after the suspicious death of her child, she crowned her second husband, Guy of Lusignan, a prince of handsome person, but of such base renown, that his own brother Jeffrey was heard to exclaim, " Since they have made *him* a king, surely they would have made *me* a god !" The choice was generally blamed ; and the most powerful vassal, Raymond count of Tripoli, who had been excluded from the succession and regency, entertained an implacable hatred against the king, and exposed his honour and conscience to the temptations of the sultan. Such were the guardians of the holy city ; a leper, a child, a woman, a coward, and a traitor : yet its fate was delayed twelve years by some supplies from Europe, by the valour of the military orders, and by the distant or domestic avocations of their great enemy. At length, on every side the sinking state was encircled and pressed by an hostile line ; and the truce was violated by the

Franks, whose existence it protected. A soldier of fortune, Reginald of Chatillon, had seized a fortress on the edge of the desert, from whence he pillaged the caravans, insulted Mahomet, and threatened the cities of Mecca and Medina. Saladin condescended to complain ; rejoiced in the denial of justice ; and at the head of 80,000 horse and foot, invaded the Holy Land. The choice of Tiberias for his first siege was suggested by the count of Tripoli, to whom it belonged ; and the king of Jerusalem was persuaded to drain his garrisons, and to arm his people for the relief of that important place. By the advice of the perfidious Raymond, the Christians were betrayed into a camp destitute of water : he fled on the first onset with the curses of both nations : Lusignan was overthrown (A.D. 1187. July 3) with the loss of 30,000 men ; and the wood of the true cross, a dire misfortune ! was left in the power of the infidels. The royal captive was conducted to the tent of Saladin ; and as he fainted with thirst and terror, the generous victor presented him with a cup of sherbet cooled in snow, without suffering his companion, Reginald of Chatillon, to partake of this pledge of hospitality and pardon. "The person and dignity of a king," said the sultan, "are sacred ; but this impious robber must instantly acknowledge the prophet, whom he has blasphemed, or meet the death which he has so often deserved." On the proud or conscientious refusal of the Christian warrior, Saladin struck him on the head with his scymetar, and Reginald was dispatched by the guards. The trembling Lusignan was sent to Damascus to an honourable prison and speedy ransom ; but the victory was stained by the execution of 230 knights of the hospital, the intrepid champions and martyrs of their faith. The kingdom was left without a head ; and of the two grand masters of the military orders, the one was slain and the other was a prisoner. From all the cities, both of the sea-coast and the inland country, the garrisons had been drawn away for this fatal field : Tyre and Tripoli alone could escape the rapid inroad of Saladin ; and three months after the battle of Tiberias he appeared in arms before the gates of Jerusalem.


He might expect, that the siege of a city, so venerable on earth and in heaven, so interesting to Europe and Asia, would rekindle the last sparks of enthusiasm ; and that, of 60,000 Christians, every man would be a soldier, and every soldier a candidate for martyrdom. But queen Sybilla trembled for herself and her captive husband ; and the barons and knights, who had escaped from the sword and chains of the Turks, displayed the same factious and selfish spirit in the public ruin. The most numerous portion of the inhabitants were composed of the Greek and Oriental Christians, whom experience had taught to prefer the Mahometan before the Latin yoke ; and the holy sepulchre attracted a base and needy crowd, without arms or courage, who subsisted only on the charity of the pilgrims. Some feeble and hasty efforts were made for the defence of Jerusalem ; but in the space of fourteen (A.D.



1187. Oct. 2) days, a victorious army drove back the sallies of the besieged, planted their engines, opened the wall to the breadth of fifteen cubits, applied their scaling-ladders, and erected on the breach twelve banners of the prophet and the sultan. It was in vain that a bare-foot procession of the queen, the women, and the monks, implored the Son of God to save his tomb and his inheritance from impious violation. Their sole hope was in the mercy of the conqueror, and to their first suppliant deputation that mercy was sternly denied. "He had sworn to avenge the patience and long-suffering of the Moslems; the hour of forgiveness was elapsed, and the moment has now arrived to expiate in blood, the innocent blood which had been spilt by Godfrey and the first crusaders." But a desperate and successful struggle of the Franks admonished the sultan that his triumph was not yet secure; he listened with reverence to a solemn adjuration in the name of the common Father of mankind; and a sentiment of human sympathy mollified the rigour of fanaticism and conquest. He consented to accept the city, and to spare the inhabitants. The Greek and Oriental Christians were permitted to live under his dominion; but it was stipulated, that in forty days all the Franks and Latins should evacuate Jerusalem, and be safely conducted to the sea-ports of Syria and Egypt; that ten pieces of gold should be paid for each man, five for each woman, and one for every child; and that those who were unable to purchase their freedom should be detained in perpetual slavery. Of some writers it is a favourite and invidious theme to compare the humanity of Saladin with the massacre of the first crusade. The difference would be merely personal; but we should not forget that the Christians had offered to capitulate, and that the Mahometans of Jerusalem sustained the last extremities of an assault and storm. Justice is indeed due to the fidelity with which the Turkish conqueror fulfilled the conditions of the treaty; and he may be deservedly praised for the glance of pity which he cast on the misery of the vanquished. Instead of a rigorous exaction of his debt, he accepted a sum of 30,000 byzants, for the ransom of 7000 poor; 2000 or 3000 more were dismissed by his gratuitous clemency: and the number of slaves was reduced to 11,000 or 14,000 persons. In his interview with the queen, his words, and even his tears, suggested the kindest consolations; his liberal alms were distributed among those who had been made orphans or widows by the fortune of war; and while the knights of the hospital were in arms against him, he allowed their more pious brethren to continue during the term of a year, the care and the service of the sick. In these acts of mercy the virtue of Saladin deserves our admiration and love: he was above the necessity of dissimulation, and his stern fanaticism would have prompted him to dissemble, rather than to affect, this profane compassion for the enemies of the Koran. After Jerusalem had been delivered from the presence of the strangers, the sultan made his

triumphant entry, his banners waving in the wind and to the harmony of martial music. The great mosque of Omar, which had been converted into a church, was again consecrated to one God and his prophet Mahomet ; the walls and pavement were purified with rose water ; and a pulpit, the labour of Nouredin, was erected in the sanctuary. But when the golden cross that glittered on the dome was cast down, and dragged through the streets, the Christians of every sect uttered a lamentable groan, which was answered by the joyful shouts of the Moslems. In four ivory chests the patriarch had collected the crosses, the images, the vases, and the relics of the holy place : they were seized by the conqueror, who was desirous of presenting the caliph with the trophies of Christian idolatry. He was persuaded however to entrust them to the patriarch and prince of Antioch ; and the pious pledge was redeemed by Richard of England, at the expense of 52,000 byzants of gold.

The nations might fear and hope the immediate and final expulsion of the Latins from Syria ; which was yet delayed (A.D. 1188) above a century after the death of Saladin. In the career of victory, he was first checked by the resistance of Tyre ; the troops and garrisons which had capitulated, were imprudently conducted to the same port : their numbers were adequate to the defence of the place ; and the arrival of Conrad of Montferrat inspired the disorderly crowd with confidence and union. His father, a venerable pilgrim, had been made prisoner in the battle of Tiberias ; but that disaster was unknown in Italy and Greece, when the son was urged by ambition and piety to visit the inheritance of his royal nephew, the infant Baldwin. The view of the Turkish banners warned him from the hostile coast of Jaffa ; and Conrad was unanimously hailed as the prince and champion of Tyre, which was already besieged by the conqueror of Jerusalem. The firmness of his zeal, and perhaps his knowledge of a generous foe, enabled him to brave the threats of the sultan, and to declare, that should his aged parent be exposed before the walls, he himself would discharge the first arrow, and glory in his descent from a Christian martyr. The Egyptian fleet was allowed to enter the harbour of Tyre ; but the chain was suddenly drawn, and five galleys were either sunk or taken : 1000 Turks were slain in a sally ; and Saladin, after burning his engines, concluded a glorious campaign by a disgraceful retreat to Damascus. He was soon assailed by a more formidable tempest. The pathetic narratives, and even the pictures, that represented in lively colours the servitude and profanation of Jerusalem, awakened the torpid sensibility of Europe : the emperor Frederic Barbarossa, and the kings of France and England, assumed the cross ; and the tardy magnitude of their armaments was anticipated by the maritime states of the Mediterranean and the Ocean. The skilful and provident Italians first embarked in the ships of Genoa,



Pisa, and Venice. They were speedily followed by the most eager pilgrims of France, Normandy, and the Western Isles. The powerful succour of Flanders, Frise, and Denmark, filled near a hundred vessels ; and the northern warriors were distinguished in the field by a lofty stature and a ponderous battle-axe. Their increasing multitudes could no longer be confined within the walls of Tyre, or remain obedient to the voice of Conrad. They pitied the misfortunes, and revered the dignity of Lusignan, who was released from prison, perhaps to divide the army of the Franks. He proposed the recovery of Ptolemais, or Acre, thirty miles to the south of Tyre ; and the place was first invested by 2000 horse and 30,000 foot under his nominal command. I shall not expatiate on the story of this memorable siege ; which lasted near two years, and consumed (A.D. 1189, July—A.D. 1191, July) in a narrow space, the forces of Europe and Asia. Never did the flame of enthusiasm burn with fiercer and more destructive rage ; nor could the true believers, a common appellation, who consecrated their own martyrs, refuse some applause to the mistaken zeal and courage of their adversaries. At the sound of the holy trumpet, the Moslems of Egypt, Syria, Arabia, and the Oriental provinces, assembled under the servant of the prophet : his camp was pitched and removed within a few miles of Acre : and he laboured, night and day, for the relief of his brethren and the annoyance of the Franks. Nine battles not unworthy of the name, were fought, in the neighbourhood of mount Carmel, with such vicissitude of fortune, that in one attack, the sultan forced his way into the city ; that in one sally the Christians penetrated to the royal tent. By the means of divers and pigeons, a regular correspondence was maintained with the besieged : and, as often as the sea was left open, the exhausted garrison was withdrawn, and a fresh supply was poured into the place. The Latin camp was thinned by famine, the sword, and the climate ; but the tents of the dead were replenished with new pilgrims, who exaggerated the strength and speed of their approaching countrymen. The vulgar was astonished by the report, that the pope himself, with an innumerable crusade, was advanced as far as Constantinople. The march of the emperor filled the East with more serious alarms ; the obstacles which he encountered in Asia, and perhaps in Greece, were raised by the policy of Saladin ; his joy on the death of Barbarossa was measured by his esteem ; and the Christians were rather dismayed than encouraged at the sight of the duke of Swabia and his wayworn remnant of 5000 Germans. At length, in the spring of the second year, the royal fleets of France and England cast anchor in the bay of Acre, and the siege was more vigorously prosecuted by the youthful emulation of the two kings, Philip Augustus, and Richard Plantagenet. After every source had been tried, and every hope was exhausted, the defenders of Acre submitted to their fate ; a capitulation was

granted, but their lives and liberties were taxed at the hard conditions of a ransom of 200,000 pieces of gold, the deliverance of 100 nobles and 1500 inferior captives, and the restoration of the wood of the holy cross. Some doubts in the agreement, and some delay in the execution, rekindled the fury of the Franks, and 3000 Moslems, almost in the Sultan's view, were beheaded by the command of the sanguinary Richard. By the conquest of Acre, the Latin powers acquired a strong town and a convenient harbour ; but the advantage was most dearly purchased. The minister and historian of Saladin computes from the report of the enemy, that their numbers, at different periods, amounted to 500,000 or 600,000 ; that more than 100,000 Christians were slain ; that a far greater number was lost by disease or shipwreck ; and that a small portion of this mighty host could return in safety to their native countries.

Philip Augustus, and Richard the first, are the only kings of France and England, who (A.D. 1191, 1192), have fought under the same banners ; but the holy service, in which they were enlisted, was incessantly disturbed by their national jealousy ; and the two factions, which they protected in Palestine, were more averse to each other than to the common enemy. In the eyes of the Orientals, the French monarch was superior in dignity and power ; and in the emperor's absence, the Latins revered him as their temporal chief. His exploits were not adequate to his fame. Philip was brave, but the statesman predominated in his character ; he was soon weary of sacrificing his health and interest on a barren coast ; the surrender of Acre became the signal of his departure ; nor could he justify this unpopular desertion, by leaving the duke of Burgundy, with 500 knights and 10,000 foot, for the service of the Holy Land. The king of England, though inferior in dignity, surpassed his rival in wealth and military renown ; and if heroism be confined to brutal and ferocious valour, Richard Plantagenet will stand high among the heroes of the age. The memory of *Cœur de Lion*, of the lion-hearted prince, was long dear and glorious to his English subjects ; and, at the distance of sixty years, it was celebrated in proverbial sayings by the grandsons of the Turks and Saracens, against whom he had fought : his tremendous name was employed by the Syrian mothers to silence their infants ; and if an horse suddenly started from the way, his rider was wont to exclaim, "Dost thou think king Richard is in that bush?" His cruelty to the Mahometans was the effect of temper and zeal ; but I cannot believe that a soldier, so free and fearless in the use of his lance, would have descended to whet a dagger against his valiant brother Conrad of Montferrat, who was slain at Tyre by some secret assassins. After the surrender of Acre, and the departure of Philip, the king of England led the crusaders to the recovery of the sea-coast ; and the cities of Cæsarea and Jaffa were added to the fragments of the

kingdom of Lusignan. A march of 100 miles from Acre to Ascalon, was a great and perpetual battle of eleven days. In the disorder of his troops, Saladin remained on the field with seventeen guards, without lowering his standard, or suspending the sound of his brazen kettle-drum : he again rallied and renewed the charge ; and his preachers or heralds called aloud on the *unitarians*, manfully to stand up against the Christian idolaters. But the progress of these idolaters was irresistible : and it was only by demolishing the walls and buildings of Ascalon, that the sultan could prevent them from occupying an important fortress on the confines of Egypt. During a severe winter, the armies slept ; but in the spring, the Franks advanced within a day's march of Jerusalem, under the leading standard of the English king ; and his active spirit intercepted a convoy, or caravan, of 7000 camels. Saladin had fixed his station in the holy city ; but the city was struck with consternation and discord : he fasted ; he prayed ; he preached ; he offered to share the dangers of the siege ; but his Mamalukes, who remembered the fate of their companions at Acre, pressed the sultan with loyal or seditious clamours, to reserve *his* person and *their* courage for the future defence of the religion and empire. The Moslems were delivered by the sudden, or, as they deemed, the miraculous, retreat of the Christians ; and the laurels of Richard were blasted by the prudence, or envy of his companions. The hero, ascending an hill, and veiling his face, exclaimed with an indignant voice, " Those who are unwilling to rescue, are unworthy to view, the sepulchre of Christ !" After his return to Acre, on the news that Jaffa was surprised by the sultan, he sailed with some merchant vessels, and leaped foremost on the beach ; the castle was relieved by his presence ; and 60,000 Turks and Saracens fled before his arms. The discovery of his weakness provoked them to return in the morning ; and they found him carelessly encamped before the gates with only seventeen knights and three hundred archers. Without counting their numbers, he sustained their charge ; and we learn from the evidence of his enemies, that the king of England, grasping his lance, rode furiously along their front, from the right to the left wing, without meeting an adversary who dared to encounter his career. Am I writing the history of Orlando or Amadis ?

During these hostilities, a languid and tedious negotiation between the Franks and Moslems was started, and continued, and broken, and again resumed, and again broken. Some acts of royal courtesy, the gift of snow and fruit, the exchange of Norway hawks and Arabian horses, softened the asperity of religious war : from the vicissitude of success, the monarchs might learn to suspect that Heaven was neutral in the quarrel ; nor, after the trial of each other, could either hope for a decisive victory. The health both of Richard and Saladin appeared to be in a declining state ; and they respectively suffered the evils of

distant and domestic warfare : Plantagenet was impatient to punish a perfidious rival who had invaded Normandy in his absence ; and the indefatigable sultan was subdued by the cries of the people, who was the victim, and of the soldiers, who were the instruments, of his martial zeal. The first demands of the king of England were the restitution of Jerusalem, Palestine, and the true cross ; and he firmly declared, that himself and his brother pilgrims would end their lives in the pious labour, rather than return to Europe with ignominy and remorse. But the conscience of Saladin refused, without some weighty compensation, to restore the idols, or promote the idolatry, of the Christians : he asserted, with equal firmness, his religious and civil claim to the sovereignty of Palestine ; descanted on the importance and sanctity of Jerusalem ; and rejected all terms of the establishment, or partition, of the Latins. The marriage which Richard proposed, of his sister with the sultan's brother, was defeated by the difference of faith. A personal interview was declined by Saladin, who alleged their mutual ignorance of each other's language ; and the negotiation was managed with much art and delay by their interpreters and envoys. The final agreement (A.D. 1192. Sept.) was equally disapproved by the zealots of both parties, by the Roman pontiff and the caliph of Bagdad. It was stipulated that Jerusalem and the holy sepulchre should be open, without tribute or vexation, to the pilgrimage of the Latin Christians ; that, after the demolition of Ascalon, they should inclusively possess the sea-coast from Jaffa to Tyre ; that the count of Tripoli and the prince of Antioch should be compromised in the truce ; and that, during three years and three months, all hostilities should cease. The principal chiefs of the two armies swore to the observance of the treaty ; but the monarchs were satisfied with giving their word and their right-hand : and the royal majesty was excused from an oath, which always implies some suspicion of falsehood and dishonour. Richard embarked for Europe to seek a long captivity and a premature grave ; and the space of a few months (A.D. 1193. Mar. 4) concluded the life and glories of Saladin. The Orientals describe his edifying death, which happened at Damascus ; but they seem ignorant of the equal distribution of his alms among the three religions, or of the display of a shroud, instead of a standard, to admonish the East of the instability of human greatness. The unity of empire was dissolved by his death ; his sons were oppressed by the stronger arm of their uncle Saphadin ; the hostile interests of the sultans of Egypt, Damascus, and Aleppo, were again revived ; and the Franks or Latins stood, and breathed, and hoped, in their fortresses along the Syrian coast.

The noblest monument of a conqueror's fame, and of the terror which he inspired, is the Saladin tenth, a general tax, which was imposed on the laity, and even the clergy, of the Latin church for the

service of the holy war. The practice was too lucrative to expire with the occasion ; and this tribute became the foundation of all the tithes and tenths on ecclesiastical benefices, which have been granted by the Roman pontiffs to Catholic sovereigns, or reserved for the immediate use of the apostolic see. This pecuniary emolument must have tended to increase the interest of the popes in the recovery of Palestine ; after the death of Saladin they preached the crusade, by their epistles, their legates, and their missionaries ; and the accomplishment of the pious work might have been expected from the zeal (A.D. 1198—1216) and talents of Innocent the third. Under that young and ambitious priest, the successors of St. Peter attained the full meridian of their greatness ; and in a reign of eighteen years, he exercised a despotic command over the emperors and kings, whom he raised and deposed ; over the nations, whom an interdict of months or years deprived, for the offence of their rulers, of the exercise of Christian worship. In the council of the Lateran he acted as the ecclesiastical, almost as the temporal, sovereign of the East and West. It was at the feet of his legate that John of England surrendered his crown ; and Innocent may boast of the two most signal triumphs over sense and humanity, the establishment of transubstantiation, and the origin of the inquisition. At his voice, two crusades, the fourth and the fifth, were undertaken ; but except a king of Hungary, the princes of the second order were at the head of the pilgrims ; the forces were inadequate to the design ; nor did the effects correspond with the hopes and wishes of the pope and the people. The fourth crusade (A.D. 1203) was diverted from Syria to Constantinople ; and the conquest of the Greek or Roman empire by the Latins will form the proper and important subject of succeeding pages. In the fifth (A.D. 1218) 200,000 Franks were landed at the eastern mouth of the Nile. They reasonably hoped that Palestine must be subdued in Egypt, the seat and storehouse of the sultan ; and, after a siege of sixteen months, the Moslems deplored the loss of Damietta. But the Christian army was ruined by the pride and insolence of the legate Pelagius, who, in the pope's name, assumed the character of general : the sickly Franks were encompassed by the waters of the Nile and the Oriental forces ; and it was by the evacuation of Damietta that they obtained a safe retreat, some concessions for the pilgrims, and the tardy restitution of the doubtful relic of the true cross. The failure may in some measure be ascribed to the abuse and multiplication of the crusades, which were preached at the same time against the Pagans of Livonia, the Moors of Spain, the Albigeois of France, and the kings of Sicily of the Imperial family. In these meritorious services, the volunteers might acquire at home the same spiritual indulgence, and a larger measure of temporal rewards ; and even the popes, in their zeal against a domestic enemy, were sometimes tempted

to forget the distress of their Syrian brethren. From the last age of the crusades they derived the occasional command of an army and revenue ; and some deep reasoners have suspected that the whole enterprise, from the first synod of Placentia, was contrived and executed by the policy of Rome. The suspicion is not founded either in nature or in fact. The successors of St. Peter appear to have followed, rather than guided, the impulse of manners and prejudice ; without much foresight of the seasons, or cultivation of the soil, they gathered the ripe and spontaneous fruits of the superstition of the times. They gathered these fruits without toil or personal danger : in the council of the Lateran, Innocent the third declared an ambiguous resolution of animating the crusaders by his example ; but the pilot of the sacred vessel could not abandon the helm ; nor was Palestine ever blessed with the presence of a Roman pontiff.

The persons, the families, and estates of the pilgrims, were under the immediate protection of the popes ; and these spiritual patrons soon claimed the prerogative of directing their operations, and enforcing, by commands and censures, the accomplishment of their vow. Frederic the second, the grandson of Barbarossa, was successively the pupil, the enemy, and the victim, of the church. At the age of twenty-one years, and in obedience to his guardian Innocent the third, he assumed (A.D. 1228) the cross ; the same promise was repeated at his royal and imperial coronations ; and his marriage with the heiress of Jerusalem for ever bound him to defend the kingdom of his son Conrad. But as Frederic advanced in age and authority, he repented of the rash engagements of his youth : his liberal sense and knowledge taught him to despise the phantoms of superstition and the crowns of Asia : he no longer entertained the same reverence for the successors of Innocent ; and his ambition was occupied by the restoration of the Italian monarchy from Sicily to the Alps. But the success of this project would have reduced the popes to their primitive simplicity ; and, after the delays and excuses of twelve years, they urged the emperor, with entreaties and threats, to fix the time and place of his departure for Palestine. In the harbours of Sicily and Apulia, he prepared a fleet of 100 galleys, and of 100 vessels, that were framed to transport and land 2500 knights, with their horses and attendants : his vassals of Naples and Germany formed a powerful army ; and the number of English crusaders was magnified to 60,000 by the report of fame. But the inevitable, or affected, slowness of these mighty preparations, consumed the strength and provisions of the more indigent pilgrims : the multitude was thinned by sickness and desertion ; and the sultry summer of Calabria anticipated the mischiefs of a Syrian campaign. At length the emperor hoisted sail at Brundisium, with a fleet and army of 40,000 men ; but he kept the sea no more than three days ; and his hasty retreat, which was ascribed by his friends to a grievous indis-

position, was accused by his enemies as a voluntary and obstinate disobedience. For suspending his vow was Frederic excommunicated by Gregory the ninth ; for presuming, the next year, to accomplish his vow, he was again excommunicated by the same pope. While he served under the banner of the cross, a crusade was preached against him in Italy ; and after his return he was compelled to ask pardon for the injuries which he had suffered. The clergy and military orders of Palestine were previously instructed to renounce his communion and dispute his commands ; and in his own kingdom, the emperor was forced to consent that the orders of the camp should be issued in the name of God and of the Christian republic. Frederic entered Jerusalem in triumph : and with his own hands (for no priest would perform the office) he took the crown from the altar of the holy sepulchre. But the patriarch cast an interdict on the church which his presence had profaned ; and the knights of the hospital and temple informed the sultan how easily he might be surprised and slain in his unguarded visit to the river Jordan. In such a state of fanaticism and faction, victory was hopeless and defence was difficult ; but the conclusion of an advantageous peace may be imputed to the discord of the Mahometans, and their personal esteem for the character of Frederic. The enemy of the church is accused of maintaining with the miscreants an intercourse of hospitality and friendship, unworthy of a Christian ; of despising the barrenness of the land ; and of indulging a profane thought ; that if Jehovah had seen the kingdom of Naples, he never would have selected Palestine for the inheritance of his chosen people. Yet Frederic obtained from the sultan the restitution of Jerusalem, of Bethlem and Nazareth, of Tyre and Sidon : the Latins were allowed to inhabit and fortify the city ; an equal code of civil and religious freedom was ratified for the sectaries of Jesus and those of Mahomet : and, while the former worshipped at the holy sepulchre, the latter might pray and preach in the mosque of the temple, from whence the prophet undertook his nocturnal journey to heaven. The clergy deplored this scandalous toleration ; and the weaker Moslems were gradually expelled : but every rational object of the crusades was accomplished without bloodshed ; the churches were restored, the monasteries were replenished ; and in the space of fifteen years, the Latins of Jerusalem exceeded the number of six thousand. This peace and prosperity, for which they were ungrateful to their benefactor, was terminated (A.D. 1243) by the irruption of the strange and savage hordes of Carizmians. Flying from the arms of the Moguls, those shepherds of the Caspian rolled headlong on Syria ; and the union of the Franks with the sultans of Aleppo, Hems, and Damascus, was insufficient to stem the violence of the torrent. Whatever stood against them, was cut off by the sword, or dragged into captivity ; the military orders were almost exterminated in a single battle ; and in the pillage of the

city, in the profanation of the holy sepulchre, the Latins confess and regret the modesty and discipline of the Turks and Saracens.

Of the seven crusades, the two last were undertaken by Louis the ninth, king of France (A.D. 1248—1254); who lost his liberty in Egypt, and his life on the coast of Africa. Twenty-eight years after his death, he was canonized at Rome; and sixty-five miracles were readily found, and solemnly attested, to justify the claim of the royal saint. The voice of history renders a more honourable testimony, that he united the virtues of a king, an hero, and a man; and his martial spirit was tempered by the love of private and public justice; and that Louis was the father of his people, the friend of his neighbours, and the terror of the infidels. Superstition alone, in all the extent of her baleful influence, corrupted his understanding and his heart; his devotion stooped to admire and imitate the begging friars of Francis and Dominic; he pursued with blind and cruel zeal the enemies of the faith; and the best of kings twice descended from his throne to seek the adventures of a spiritual knight-errant. A monkish historian would have been content to applaud the most despicable part of his character; but the noble and gallant Joinville, who shared the friendship and captivity of Louis, has traced with the pencil of nature the free portrait of his virtues as well as of his failings. From this intimate knowledge, we may learn to suspect the political views of depressing their great vassals, which are so often imputed to the royal authors of the crusades. Above all the princes of the middle ages, Louis the ninth successfully laboured to restore the prerogatives of the crown; but it was at home, and not in the East, that he acquired for himself and his posterity; his vow was the result of enthusiasm and sickness: and if he were the promoter, he was likewise the victim, of his holy madness. For the invasion of Egypt, France was exhausted of her troops and treasures; he covered the sea of Cyprus with 1800 sails; the most modest enumeration amounts to 50,000 men; and, if we might trust his own confession, as it is reported by Oriental vanity, he disembarked 9500 horse, and 130,000 foot, who performed their pilgrimage under the shadow of his power.

In complete armour, the oriflamme waving before him, Louis leaped foremost on the beach; and the strong city of Damietta, which had cost his predecessors a siege of sixteen months, was (A.D. 1249) abandoned on the first assault by the trembling Moslems. But Damietta was the first and the last of his conquests: and in the fifth and sixth crusades, the same causes, almost on the same ground, were productive of similar calamities. After a ruinous delay, which introduced into the camp the seeds of an epidemical disease, the Franks advanced from the sea-coast towards the capital of Egypt, and strove to surmount the unseasonable inundation of the Nile, which opposed their progress. Under the eye of their intrepid monarch, the barons and knights of

France displayed their invincible contempt of danger and discipline : his brother, the count of Artois, stormed with inconsiderable valour the town of Massoura ; and the carrier pigeons announced to the inhabitants of Cairo, that all was lost. But a soldier, who afterwards usurped the sceptre, rallied the flying troops : the main body of the Christians was far behind their vanguard ; and Artois was overpowered and slain. A shower of Greek fire was incessantly poured on the invaders ; the Nile was commanded by the Egyptian galleys, the open country by the Arabs ; all provisions were intercepted ; each day aggravated the sickness and famine ; and about the same time a retreat was found to be necessary and impracticable. The Oriental writers confess, that Louis might have escaped, if he would have deserted his subjects : he was made prisoner, with the greatest part of his nobles ; all who could not redeem their lives by service or ransom, were inhumanly massacred ; and the walls of Cairo were decorated with a circle of Christian heads. The king of France was (A.D. 1250, April 5—May 6) loaded with chains ; but the generous victor, a great grandson of the brother of Saladin, sent a robe of honour to his royal captive ; and his deliverance, with that of his soldiers, was obtained by the restitution of Damietta and the payment of 400,000 pieces of gold. In a soft and luxurious climate, the degenerate children of the companions of Nouredin and Saladin were incapable of resisting the flower of European chivalry : they triumphed by the arms of their slaves or Mamalukes, the hardy natives of Tartary, who at a tender age had been purchased of the Syrian merchants, and were educated in the camp and palace of the sultan. But Egypt soon afforded a new example of the danger of prætorian bands : and the rage of these ferocious animals, who had been let loose on the strangers, was provoked to devour their benefactor. In the pride of conquest, Touran Shaw, the last of his race, was murdered by his Mamalukes ; and the most daring of the assassins entered the chamber of the captive king, with drawn scymetars, and their hands imbrued in the blood of their sultan. The firmness of Louis commanded their respect ; their avarice prevailed over cruelty and zeal ; the treaty was accomplished ; and the king of France, with the relics of his army, was permitted to embark for Palestine. He wasted four years within the walls of Acre, unable to visit Jerusalem, and unwilling to return to his native country.

The memory of his defeat excited Louis, after sixteen years of wisdom and repose, to undertake the seventh and last of the crusades. His finances were restored, his kingdom was enlarged ; a new generation of warriors had arisen, and he embarked with fresh confidence at the head of 6000 horse and 30,000 foot. The loss of Antioch had provoked the enterprise : a wild hope of baptizing the king of Tunis, tempted him to steer for the African coast ; and the report of an immense treasure reconciled his troops to the delay of their voyage to

the Holy Land. Instead of a proselyte, he found a siege ; the French panted and died on the burning sands ; St. Louis expired (A.D. 1270, Aug. 25) in his tent ; and no sooner had he closed his eyes, than his son and successor gave the signal of the retreat. "It is thus," says Voltaire, "that a Christian king died near the ruins of Carthage, waging war against the sectaries of Mahomet, in a land to which Dido had introduced the deities of Syria."

A more unjust and absurd constitution cannot be devised, than that which condemns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude, under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves. Yet such has been the state of Egypt above five hundred years. The most illustrious sultans of the Baharite and Borgite dynasties (A.D. 1250—1517), were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands ; and the four-and-twenty beys or military chiefs, have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants. They produce the great charter of their liberties, the treaty of Selim the first with the republic ; and the Othman emperor still accepts from Egypt a slight acknowledgment of tribute and subjection. With some breathing intervals of peace and order, the two dynasties are marked as a period of rapine and bloodshed : but their throne, however shaken, reposed on the two pillars of discipline and valour ; their sway extended over Egypt, Nubia, Arabia, and Syria ; their Mamalukes were multiplied from 800 to 25,000 horse ; and their numbers were increased by a provincial militia of 107,000 foot, and the occasional aid of 66,000 Arabs. Princes of such power and spirit could not long endure on their coast an hostile and independent nation ; and if the ruin of the Franks was postponed about forty years, they were indebted to the cares of an unsettled reign, to the invasion of the Moguls, and to the occasional aid of some warlike pilgrims. Among these, the English reader will observe the name of our first Edward, who assumed the cross in the lifetime of his father Henry. At the head of a thousand soldiers, the future conqueror of Wales and Scotland delivered Acre from a siege ; marched as far as Nazareth with an army of 9000 men ; emulated the fame of his uncle Richard ; extorted, by his valour, a ten years' truce ; and escaped, with a dangerous wound, from the dagger of a fanatic assassin. Antioch, whose situation had been less exposed to the calamities of the holy war, was (A.D. 1268, June 12) finally occupied and ruined by Bondocdar, or Bibars, sultan of Egypt and Syria ; the Latin principality was extinguished ; and the first seat of the Christian name was despoiled by the slaughter of 17,000, and the captivity of 100,000 of her inhabitants. The maritime towns of Laodicea, Gabala, Tripoli, Berytus, Sidon, Tyre, and Jaffa, and the stronger castles of the Hospitalers and Templars, successively fell ; and the whole existence of the Franks was confined to the city and colony of St. John of Acre, which is sometimes described by the more classic title of Ptolemais.

After the loss of Jerusalem, Acre, which is distant about 70 miles, became the metropolis of the Latin Christians, and was adorned with strong and stately buildings, with aqueducts, an artificial port, and a double wall. The population was increased by the incessant streams of pilgrims and fugitives ; in the pauses of hostility, the trade of the East and West was attracted to this convenient station ; and the market could offer the produce of every clime and the interpreters of every tongue. But in this conflux of nations, every vice was propagated and practised : of all the disciples of Jesus and Mahomet, the male and female inhabitants of Acre were esteemed the most corrupt ; nor could the abuse of religion be corrected by the discipline of law. The city had many sovereigns, and no government. The kings of Jerusalem and Cyprus, of the house of Lusignan, the princes of Antioch, the counts of Tripoli and Sidon, the great masters of the hospital, the temple, and the Teutonic order, the republics of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, the pope's legate, the kings of France and England, assumed an independent command : seventeen tribunals exercised the power of life and death ; every criminal was protected in the adjacent quarter ; and the perpetual jealousy of the nations often burst forth in acts of violence and blood. Some adventurers, who disgraced the ensign of the cross, compensated their want of pay by the plunder of the Mahometan villages : nineteen Syrian merchants, who traded under the public faith, were despoiled and hanged by the Christians ; and the denial of satisfaction justified the arms of the sultan Khalil. He marched against Acre at the head of 60,000 horse and 140,000 foot : his train of artillery (if I may use the word) was numerous and weighty ; the separate timbers of a single engine were transported in one hundred waggons ; and the royal historian Abulfeda, who served with the troops of Hamah, was himself a spectator of the holy war. Whatever might be the vices of the Franks, their courage was rekindled by enthusiasm and despair ; but they were torn by the discord of seventeen chiefs, and overwhelmed on all sides by the powers of the sultan. After a siege of thirty-three days, the double wall was (A.D. 1291, May 18) forced by the Moslems ; the principal tower yielded to their engines ; the Mamalukes made a general assault ; the city was stormed ; and death or slavery was the lot of 60,000 Christians. The convent, or rather fortress, of the Templars, resisted three days longer ; but the great master was pierced with an arrow ; and, of 500 knights, only ten were left alive, less happy than the victims of the sword, if they lived to suffer on a scaffold in the unjust and cruel proscription of the whole order. The king of Jerusalem, the patriarch, and the great master of the hospital, effected their retreat to the shore ; but the sea was rough ; the vessels were insufficient : and great numbers of the fugitives were drowned before they could reach the isle of Cyprus, which might comfort Lusignan for the loss of Palestine. By

the command of the sultan, the churches and fortifications of the Latin cities were demolished ; a motive of avarice or fear still opened the holy sepulchre to some devout and defenceless pilgrims ; and a mournful and solitary silence prevailed along the coast which had so long resounded with the WORLD'S DEBATE.

The restoration of the Western empire by Charlemagne, was speedily followed by the separation of the Greek and Latin churches. A religious and national animosity still divides the two largest communions of the Christian world ; and the schism of Constantinople, by alienating her most useful allies, and provoking her most dangerous enemies, has precipitated the decline and fall of the Roman empire in the East.

In the course of the present history, the aversion of the Greeks for the Latins has been often visible and conspicuous. It was originally derived from the disdain of servitude, inflamed, after the time of Constantine, by the pride of equality or dominion ; and finally exasperated by the preference which their rebellious subjects had given to the alliance of the Franks. In every age, the Greeks were proud of their superiority in profane and religious knowledge : they had first received the light of Christianity ; they had pronounced the decrees of the seven general councils : they alone possessed the language of Scripture and philosophy ; nor should the Barbarians, immersed in the darkness of the West, presume to argue on the high and mysterious questions of theological science. Those Barbarians despised in their turn the restless and subtle levity of the Orientals, the authors of every heresy ; and blessed their own simplicity, which was content to hold the tradition of the apostolic church. Yet, in the seventh century, the synods of Spain, and afterwards of France, improved or corrupted the Nicene creed, on the mysterious subject of the third person of the Trinity. In the long controversies of the East, the nature and generation of the Christ had been scrupulously defined ; and the well-known relation of father and son seemed to convey a faint image to the human mind. The idea of birth was less analogous to the Holy Spirit, who, instead of a divine gift or attribute, was considered by the Catholics, as a substance, a person, a god ; he was not begotten, but in the orthodox style, he *proceeded*. Did he proceed from the Father alone, perhaps *by* the Son ? or from the Father and Son ? The first of these opinions was asserted by the Greeks, the second by the Latins ; and the addition to the Nicene creed of the word *filioque*, kindled the flame of discord between the Oriental and the Gallic churches. In the origin of the dispute, the Roman pontiffs affected a character of neutrality and moderation : they condemned the innovation, but they acquiesced in the sentiment, of their Transalpine brethren : they seemed desirous of casting a veil of silence and charity over the superfluous research ; and in the correspondence of Charlemagne and Leo the third, the pope

assumes the liberality of a statesman, and the prince descends to the passions and prejudices of a priest. But the orthodoxy of Rome spontaneously obeyed the impulse of her temporal policy ; and the *filioque* which Leo wished to erase, was transcribed in the symbol and chaunted in the liturgy of the Vatican. The Nicene and Athanasian creeds are held as the Catholic faith, without which none can be saved ; and both Papists and Protestants must now sustain and return the anathemas of the Greeks, who deny the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, as well as from the Father. Such articles of faith are not susceptible of treaty ; but the rules of discipline will vary in remote and independent churches ; and the reason, even of divines, might allow, that the difference is inevitable and harmless. The craft or superstition of Rome has imposed on her priests and deacons the rigid obligation of celibacy ; among the Greeks it is confined to the bishops ; the loss is compensated by dignity or annihilated by age ; and the parochial clergy, the papas, enjoy the conjugal society of the wives whom they have married before their entrance into holy orders. A question concerning the *Azyms* was fiercely debated in the eleventh century, and the essence of the Eucharist was supposed, in the East and West, to depend on the use of leavened or unleavened bread. Shall I mention in a serious history the furious reproaches that were urged against the Latins, who, for a long while, remained on the defensive ? They neglected to abstain, according to the apostolic decree, from things strangled, and from blood : they fasted, a Jewish observance ! on the Saturday of each week : during the first week of Lent they permitted the use of milk and cheese ; their infirm monks were indulged in the taste of flesh ; and animal grease was substituted for the want of vegetable oil : the holy chrism or unction in baptism, was reserved to the episcopal order : the bishops, as the bridegrooms of their churches, were decorated with rings ; their priests shaved their faces, and baptized by a single immersion. Such were the crimes which provoked the zeal of the patriarchs of Constantinople, and which were justified with equal zeal by the doctors of the Latin church.

Bigotry and national aversion are powerful magnifiers of every object of dispute ; but the immediate cause of the schism of the Greeks may be traced in the emulation of the leading prelates, who maintained the supremacy of the old metropolis superior to all, and of the reigning capital, inferior to none, in the Christian world. About the middle of the ninth century, Photius, an ambitious layman, the captain of the guard and principal secretary, was promoted (A.D. 857—886) by merit and favour to the more desirable office of patriarch of Constantinople. In science, even ecclesiastical science, he surpassed the clergy of the age ; and the purity of his morals has never been impeached : but his ordination was hasty, his rise was irregular ; and Ignatius, his abdicated predecessor, was yet supported by the public compassion and

the obstinacy of his adherents. They appealed to the tribunal of Nicholas the first, one of the proudest and most aspiring of the Roman pontiffs, who embraced the welcome opportunity of judging and condemning his rival of the East. Their quarrel was embittered by a conflict of jurisdiction over the king and nation of the Bulgarians; nor was their recent conversion to Christianity of much avail to either prelate, unless he could number the proselytes among the subjects of his power. With the aid of his court the Greek patriarch was victorious; but in the furious contest he deposed in his turn the successor of St. Peter, and involved the Latin church in the reproach of heresy and schism. Photius sacrificed the peace of the world to a short and precarious reign: he fell with his patron, the Cæsar Bardas; and Basil the Macedonian performed an act of justice in the restoration of Ignatius, whose age and dignity had not been sufficiently respected. From his monastery, or prison, Photius solicited the favour of the emperor by pathetic complaints and artful flattery; and the eyes of his rival were scarcely closed, when he was again restored to the throne of Constantinople. After the death of Basil, he experienced the vicissitudes of courts and the ingratitude of a royal pupil: the patriarch was again deposed, and in his last solitary hours he might regret the freedom of a secular and studious life. In each revolution, the breath, the nod, of the sovereign had been accepted by a submissive clergy; and a synod of 300 bishops was always prepared to hail the triumph, or to stigmatise the fall, of the holy, or the execrable Photius. By a delusive promise of succour or reward, the popes were tempted to countenance these various proceedings; and the synods of Constantinople were ratified by their epistles or legates. But the court and the people, Ignatius and Photius, were equally adverse to their claims; their ministers were insulted or imprisoned; the procession of the Holy Ghost was forgotten; Bulgaria was for ever annexed to the Byzantine throne; and the schism was prolonged by the rigid censure of all the multiplied ordinations of an irregular patriarch. The darkness and corruption of the tenth century suspended the intercourse, without reconciling the minds, of the two nations. But when the Norman sword restored the churches of Apulia to the jurisdiction of Rome, the departing flock was warned, by a petulant epistle of the Greek patriarch, to avoid and abhor the errors of the Latins. The rising majesty of Rome could no longer brook the insolence of a rebel; and Michael Cerularius was excommunicated in the heart of Constantinople by the pope's legates. Shaking the dust from their feet, they (A.D. 1054. July 16) deposited on the altar of St. Sophia a direful anathema, which enumerates the seven mortal heresies of the Greeks, and devotes the guilty teachers, and their unhappy sectaries, to the eternal society of the devil and his angels. According to the emergencies of the church and state, a friendly correspondence was

sometimes resumed ; the language of charity and concord was sometimes affected ; but the Greeks have never recanted their errors ; the popes have never repealed their sentence : and from this thunder-bolt we may date the consummation of the schism. It was enlarged by each ambitious step of the Roman pontiffs : the emperors blushed and trembled at the ignominious fate of their royal brethren of Germany ; and the people were scandalized by the temporal power and military life of the Latin clergy.

The aversion of the Greeks and Latins was nourished and manifested (A.D. 1100—1200) in the three first expeditions to the Holy Land. Alexius Comnenus contrived the absence at least of the formidable pilgrims : his successors, Manuel and Isaac Angelus, conspired with the Moslems for the ruin of the greatest princes of the Franks ; and their crooked and malignant policy was seconded by the active and voluntary obedience of every order of their subjects. Of this hostile temper, a large portion may doubtless be ascribed to the difference of language, dress, and manners, which severs and alienates the nations of the globe. The pride, as well as the prudence, of the sovereign was deeply wounded by the intrusion of foreign armies, that claimed a right of traversing his dominions and passing under the walls of his capital : his subjects were insulted and plundered by the rude strangers of the West ; and the hatred of the pusillanimous Greeks was sharpened by secret envy of the bold and pious enterprises of the Franks. But these profane causes of national enmity were fortified and inflamed by the venom of religious zeal. Instead of a kind embrace, an hospitable reception, from their Christian brethren of the East, every tongue was taught to repeat the names of schismatic and heretic, more odious to an orthodox ear than those of pagan and infidel : instead of being loved for the general conformity of faith and worship, they were abhorred for some rules of discipline, some questions of theology, in which themselves or their teachers might differ from the Oriental church. In the crusade of Louis the seventh, the Greek clergy washed and purified the altars which had been defiled by the sacrifice of a French priest. The companions of Frederic Barbarossa deplore the injuries which they endured, both in word and deed, from the peculiar rancour of the bishops and monks. Their prayers and sermons excited the people against the impious Barbarians ; and the patriarch is accused of declaring, that the faithful might obtain the redemption of all their sins by the extirpation of the schismatics. An enthusiast, named Dorotheus, alarmed the fears, and restored the confidence, of the emperor, by a prophetic assurance, that the German heretic, after assaulting the gate of Blachernes, would be made a signal example of the divine vengeance. The passage of these mighty armies were rare and perilous events ; but the crusades introduced a frequent and familiar intercourse between the

two nations, which enlarged their knowledge without abating their prejudices. The wealth and luxury of Constantinople demanded the productions of every climate : these imports were balanced by the art and labour of her numerous inhabitants ; her situation invites the commerce of the world ; and, in every period of her existence, that commerce has been in the hands of foreigners. After the decline of Amalphi, the Venetians, Pisans, and Genoese, introduced their factories and settlements into the capital of the empire : their services were rewarded with honours and immunities ; they acquired the possession of lands and houses ; their families were multiplied by marriages with the natives ; and, after the toleration of a Mahometan mosque, it was impossible to interdict the churches of the Roman rite. The two wives of Manuel Comnenus were of the race of the Franks ; the first, a sister-in-law of the emperor Conrad ; the second, a daughter of the prince of Antioch : he obtained for his son Alexius a daughter of Philip Augustus king of France ; and he bestowed his own daughter on a marquis of Montferrat, who was educated and dignified in the palace of Constantinople. The Greek encountered the arms, and aspired to the empire, of the West ; he esteemed the valour, and trusted the fidelity, of the Franks ; their military talents were unfitly recompensed by the lucrative offices of judges and treasurers ; the policy of Manuel had solicited the alliance of the pope ; and the popular voice accused him of a partial bias to the nation and religion of the Latins. During his reign, and that of his successor Alexius, they were exposed at Constantinople to the reproach of foreigners, heretics, and favourites ; and this triple guilt was severely expiated in the tumult, which announced the return and elevation of Andronicus. The people rose (A.D. 1183) in arms ; from the Asiatic shore the tyrant dispatched his troops and galleys to assist the national revenge ; and the hopeless resistance of the strangers served only to justify the rage, and sharpen the daggers, of the assassins. Neither age, nor sex, nor the ties of friendship or kindred, could save the victims of national hatred, and avarice, and religious zeal : the Latins were slaughtered in their houses and in the streets ; their quarter was reduced to ashes ; the clergy were burnt in their churches, and the sick in their hospitals ; and some estimate may be formed of the slain from the clemency which sold above 4000 Christians in perpetual slavery to the Turks. The priests and monks were the loudest and most active in the destruction of the schismatics ; and they chaunted a thanksgiving to the Lord, when the head of a Roman cardinal, the pope's legate, was severed from his body, fastened to the tail of a dog, and dragged, with savage mockery, through the city. The more diligent of the strangers had retreated, on the first alarm, to their vessels, and escaped through the Hellespont from the scene of blood. In their flight, they burnt and ravaged 200 miles of the sea-coast ; inflicted a severe revenge on

the guiltless subjects of the empire ; marked the priests and monks as their peculiar enemies ; and compensated, by the accumulation of plunder, the loss of their property and friends. On their return, they exposed to Italy and Europe the wealth and weakness, the perfidy and malice, of the Greeks, whose vices were painted as the genuine characters of heresy and schism. The scruples of the first crusaders had neglected the fairest opportunities of securing, by the possession of Constantinople, the way to the Holy Land : a domestic revolution invited, and almost compelled, the French and Venetians to achieve the conquest of the Roman empire of the east.

In the series of the Byzantine princes, I have exhibited the hypocrisy and ambition, the tyranny and fall, of Andronicus, the last male of the Comnenian family who reigned at Constantinople. The revolution, which cast him headlong from the throne, saved and exalted Isaac Angelus (A.D. 1185—1195, Sept. 12), who descended by the females from the same imperial dynasty. The successor of a second Nero might have found it an easy task to deserve the esteem and affection of his subjects : they sometimes had reason to regret the administration of Andronicus. The sound and vigorous mind of the tyrant was capable of discerning the connexion between his own and the public interest ; and while he was feared by all who could inspire him with fear, the unsuspected people, and the remote provinces, might bless the inexorable justice of their master. But his successor was vain and jealous of the supreme power, which he wanted courage and abilities to exercise ; his vices were pernicious, his virtues (if he possessed any virtues) were useless to mankind ; and the Greeks, who imputed their calamities to his negligence, denied him the merit of any transient or accidental benefits of the times. Isaac slept on the throne, and was awakened only by the sound of pleasure : his vacant hours were amused by comedians and buffoons, and even to these buffoons the emperor was an object of contempt ; his feasts and buildings exceeded the examples of royal luxury ; the number of his eunuchs and domestics amounted to 20,000 ; and a daily sum of 4000 pounds of silver would swell to four millions sterling the annual expence of his household and table. His poverty was relieved by oppression ; and the public discontent was inflamed by equal abuses in the collection, and the application, of the revenue. While the Greeks numbered the days of their servitude, a flattering prophet, whom he rewarded with the dignity of patriarch, assured him of a long and victorious reign of thirty-two years ; during which he should extend his sway to mount Libanus, and his conquests beyond the Euphrates. But his only step towards the accomplishment of the prediction, was a splendid and scandalous embassy to Saladin, to demand the restitution of the holy sepulchre, and to propose an offensive and defensive league with the enemy of the Christian name.

In these unworthy hands, of Isaac and his brother, the remains of the Greek empire crumbled into dust. The island of Cyprus, whose name excites the ideas of elegance and pleasure, was usurped by his namesake, a Comnenian prince : and by a strange concatenation of events, the sword of our Richard bestowed that kingdom on the house of Lusignan, a rich compensation for the loss of Jerusalem.

The honour of the monarchy, and the safety of the capital, were deeply wounded by the revolt (A.D. 1186) of the Bulgarians and Wallachians. Since the victory of the second Basil, they had supported, above 170 years, the loose dominion of the Byzantine princes ; but no effectual measures had been adopted to impose the yoke of laws and manners on these savage tribes. By the command of Isaac, their sole means of subsistence, their flocks and herds, were driven away, to contribute towards the pomp of the royal nuptials : and their fierce warriors were exasperated by the denial of equal rank and pay in the military service. Peter and Asan, two powerful chiefs, of the race of the ancient kings, asserted their own rights and the national freedom : their demoniac impostors proclaimed to the crowd that their glorious patron St. Demetrius had for ever deserted the cause of the Greeks ; and the conflagration spread from the banks of the Danube to the hills of Macedonia and Thrace. After some faint efforts, Isaac Angelus and his brother acquiesced in their independence ; and the Imperial troops were soon discouraged by the bones of their fellow-soldiers, that were scattered along the passes of mount Hæmus. By the arms and policy of John or Joannices, the second kingdom of Bulgaria was firmly established. The subtle Barbarian sent an embassy to Innocent the third, to acknowledge himself a genuine son of Rome in descent and religion ; and humbly received from the pope the licence of coining money, the royal title, and a Latin archbishop or patriarch. The Vatican exulted in the spiritual conquest of Bulgaria, the first object of the schism ; and if the Greeks could have preserved the prerogatives of the church, they would gladly have resigned the rights of the monarchy.

The Bulgarians were malicious enough to pray for the long life of Isaac Angelus, the surest pledge of their freedom and prosperity. Yet their chiefs could involve in the same indiscriminate contempt, the family and nation of the emperor. "In all the Greeks," said Asan to his troops, "the same climate, and character, and education, will be productive of the same fruits. Behold my lance," continued the warrior, "and the long streamers that float in the wind. They differ only in colour ; they are formed of the same silk and fashioned by the same workman ; nor has the stripe that is stained in purple any superior price or value above its fellows." Several of these candidates for the purple successively rose and fell under the empire of Isaac : a general who had repelled the fleets of Sicily, was driven

to revolt and ruin by the ingratitude of the prince ; and his luxurious repose was disturbed by secret conspiracies and popular insurrections. The emperor was saved by accident, or the merit of his servants : he was at length oppressed by an ambitious brother, who, for the hope of a precarious diadem, forgot the obligations of nature, of loyalty, and of friendship. While Isaac in the Thracian valleys pursued the idle and solitary pleasures of the chase, his brother, Alexius Angelus, was (A.D. 1203, April 8) invested with the purple, by the unanimous suffrage of the camp : the capital and the clergy subscribed to their choice ; and the vanity of the new sovereign rejected the name of his fathers, for the lofty and royal appellation of the Comnenian race. On the despicable character of Isaac I have exhausted the language of contempt ; and can only add, that in a reign of eight years, the baser Alexius was supported by the masculine vices of his wife Euphrosyne. The first intelligence of his fall was conveyed to the late emperor by the hostile aspect and pursuit of the guards, no longer his own : he fled before them above fifty miles as far as Stagyra in Macedonia ; but the fugitive, without an object or a follower, was arrested, brought back to Constantinople, deprived of his eyes, and confined in a lonesome tower, on a scanty allowance of bread and water. At the moment of the revolution, his son Alexius, whom he educated in the hope of empire, was twelve years of age. He was spared by the usurper, and reduced to attend his triumph both in peace and war ; but as the army was encamped on the sea-shore, an Italian vessel facilitated the escape of the royal youth ; and, in the disguise of a common sailor, he eluded the search of his enemies, passed the Hellespont, and found a secure refuge in the isle of Sicily. After saluting the threshold of the apostles, and imploring the protection of Pope Innocent the third, Alexius accepted the kind invitation of his sister Irene, the wife of Philip of Swabia, king of the Romans. But in his passage through Italy he heard that the flower of Western chivalry was assembled at Venice for the deliverance of the Holy Land ; and a ray of hope was kindled in his bosom, that their invincible swords might be employed in his father's restoration.

About ten or twelve years after the loss of Jerusalem, the nobles of France were (A.D. 1198) again summoned to the holy war by the voice of a third prophet, less extravagant, perhaps, than Peter the hermit, but far below St. Bernard in the merit of an orator and a statesman. An illiterate priest of the neighbourhood of Paris, Fulk of Neuilly, forsook his parochial duty, to assume the more flattering character of a popular and itinerant missionary. The fame of his sanctity and miracles was spread over the land ; he declaimed, with severity and vehemence, against the vices of the age ; and his sermons, which he preached in the streets of Paris, converted the robbers, the usurers, the prostitutes, and even the doctors and scholars of the university. No sooner did Inno-

cent the third ascend the chair of St. Peter, than he proclaimed in Italy, Germany and France, the obligation of a new crusade. The eloquent pontiff described the ruin of Jerusalem, the triumph of the Pagans, and the shame of Christendom : his liberality proposed the redemption of sins, a plenary indulgence to all who should serve in Palestine, either a year in person, or two years by a substitute ; and among his legates and orators who blew the sacred trumpet, Fulk of Neuilly was the loudest and most successful. The situation of the principal monarchs was averse to the pious summons. The emperor Frederic the second was a child ; and his kingdom of Germany was disputed by the rival houses of Brunswick and Swabia, the memorable factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines. Philip Augustus of France had performed, and could not be persuaded to renew, the perilous vow ; but as he was not less ambitious of praise than of power, he cheerfully instituted a perpetual fund for the defence of the Holy Land. Richard of England was satiated with the glory and misfortunes of his first adventure, and he presumed to deride the exhortations of Fulk of Neuilly, who was not abashed in the presence of kings. "You advise me," said Plantagenet, "to dismiss my three daughters, pride, avarice, and incontinence : I bequeath them to the most deserving ; my pride to the knights-templars, my avarice to the monks of Cisteaux, and my incontinence to the prelates." But the preacher was heard and obeyed by the great vassals, the princes of the second order ; and Theobald, or Thibaut, count of Champagne, was the foremost in the holy race. The valiant youth, at the age of twenty-two years, was encouraged by the domestic examples of his father, who marched in the second crusade, and of his elder brother, who had ended his days in Palestine with the title of king of Jerusalem : two thousand two hundred knights owed service and homage to his peerage : the nobles of Champagne excelled in all the exercises of war ; and by his marriage with the heiress of Navarre, Thibaut could draw a band of hardy Gascons from either side of the Pyrenæan mountains. His companion in arms was Louis, count of Blois and Chartres ; like himself of regal lineage, for both the princes were nephews, at the same time, of the kings of France and England. In a crowd of prelates and barons, who imitated their zeal, I distinguish the birth and merit of Matthew of Montmorency ; the famous Simon of Montfort, the scourge of the Albigeois ; and a valiant noble, Jeffrey of Villehardouin, marshal of Champagne, who has condescended, in the rude idiom of his age and country, to write or dictate an original narrative of the councils and actions, in which he bore a memorable part. At the same time, Baldwin count of Flanders, who had married the sister of Thibaut, assumed the cross at Bruges, with his brother Henry and the principal knights and citizens of that rich and industrious province. The vow which the chiefs had pronounced in

churches, they ratified in tournaments : the operations of the war were debated in full and frequent assemblies ; and it was resolved to seek the deliverance of Palestine in Egypt, a country, since Saladin's death, which was almost ruined by famine and civil war. But the fate of so many royal armies displayed the toils and perils of a land expedition ; and, if the Flemings dwelt along the ocean, the French barons were destitute of ships and ignorant of navigation. They embraced the wise resolution of chusing six deputies or representatives, of whom Villehardouin was one, with a discretionary trust to direct the motions, and to pledge the faith, of the whole confederacy. The maritime states of Italy were alone possessed of the means of transporting the holy warriors with their arms and horses ; and the six deputies proceeded to Venice to solicit, on motives of piety or interest, the aid of that powerful republic.

In the invasion of Italy by Attila, I have mentioned the flight (A.D. 697) of the Venetians from the fallen cities of the continent, and their obscure shelter in the chain of islands that line the extremity of the Hadriatic gulf. In the midst of the waters, free, indigent, laborious, and inaccessible, they gradually coalesced into a republic : the first foundations of Venice were laid in the island of Rialto ; and the annual election of the twelve tribunes was superseded by the permanent office of a duke or doge. On the verge of the two empires the Venetians exult in the belief of primitive and perpetual independence. Against the Latins, their antique freedom has been asserted by the sword, and may be justified by the pen. Charlemagne[himself] resigned all claims of sovereignty to the islands of the Hadriatic gulf ; his son Pepin was repulsed in the attacks of the *lagunas* or canals, too deep for the cavalry, and too shallow for the vessels ; and in every age, under the German Cæsars, the lands of the republic have been clearly distinguished from the kingdom of Italy. But the inhabitants of Venice were considered by themselves, by strangers, and by their sovereigns, as an inalienable portion of the Greek empire ; in the ninth and tenth centuries, the proofs of their subjection are numerous and unquestionable ; and the vain titles, the servile honours, of the Byzantine court, so ambitiously solicited by their dukes, would have degraded the magistrates of a free people. But the bands of this dependence, which was never absolute or rigid, were imperceptibly relaxed by the ambition of Venice and the weakness of Constantinople. Obedience was softened into respect, privilege ripened into prerogative, and the freedom of domestic government was fortified by the independence of foreign dominion. The maritime cities of Istria and Dalmatia bowed to the sovereigns of the Hadriatic ; and when they armed against the Normans in the cause of Alexius, the emperor applied, not to the duty of his subjects, but to the gratitude and generosity of his faithful allies. The sea was their patrimony : the western parts of the

Mediterranean, from Tuscany to Gibraltar, were indeed abandoned to their rivals of Pisa and Genoa ; but the Venetians acquired an early and lucrative share of the commerce of Greece and Egypt. Their riches increased with the increasing demand of Europe : their manufactures of silk and glass, perhaps the institution of their bank, are of high antiquity ; and they enjoyed the fruits of their industry in the magnificence of public and private life. To assert her flag, to avenge her injuries, to protect the freedom of navigation, the republic could launch and man a fleet of an hundred galleys ; and the Greeks, the Saracens, and the Normans, were encountered by her naval arms. The Franks of Syria were assisted by the Venetians in the reduction of the sea-coast ; but their zeal was neither blind nor disinterested ; and in the conquest of Tyre, they shared the sovereignty of a city, the first seat of the commerce of the world. The policy of Venice was marked by the avarice of a trading, and the insolence of a maritime power ; yet her ambition was prudent ; nor did she often forget that if armed galleys were the effect and safeguard, merchant vessels were the cause and supply, of her greatness. In her religion she avoided the schism of the Greeks, without yielding a servile obedience to the Roman pontiff ; and a free intercourse with the infidels of every clime appears to have allayed betimes the fever of superstition. Her primitive government was a loose mixture of democracy and monarchy : the doge was elected by the votes of the general assembly ; as long as he was popular and successful, he reigned with the pomp and authority of a prince ; but in the frequent revolutions of the state, he was deposed, or banished, or slain, by the justice or injustice of the multitude. The twelfth century produced the first rudiments of the wise and jealous aristocracy, which has reduced the doge to a pageant and the people to a cipher.

When the six ambassadors of the French pilgrims arrived (A.D. 1201) at Venice, they were hospitably entertained in the palace of St. Mark, by the reigning duke : his name was Henry Dandolo ; and he shone in the last period of human life as one of the most illustrious characters of the times. Under the weight of years, and after the loss of his eyes, Dandolo retained a sound understanding and a manly courage ; the spirit of an hero, ambitious to signalize his reign by some memorable exploits, and the wisdom of a patriot, anxious to build his fame on the glory and advantage of his country. He praised the bold enthusiasm and liberal confidence of the barons and their deputies ; in such a cause, and with such associates, he should aspire, were he a private man, to terminate his life ; but he was the servant of the republic, and some delay was requisite to consult, on this arduous business, the judgment of his colleagues. The proposal of the French was first debated by the six *sages* who had been recently appointed to control the administration of the doge : it was next disclosed to the

forty members of the council of state ; and finally communicated to the legislative assembly of four hundred and fifty representatives, who were annually chosen in the six quarters of the city. In peace and war, the doge was still the chief of the republic ; his legal authority was supported by the personal reputation of Dandolo : his arguments of public interest were balanced and approved ; and he was authorized to inform the ambassadors of the following conditions of the treaty. It was proposed that the crusaders should assemble at Venice, on the feast of St. John of the ensuing year : that flat-bottomed vessels should be prepared for 4500 horses, and 9000 squires, with a number of ships sufficient for the embarkation of 4500 knights, and 20,000 foot : that during a term of nine months they should be supplied with provisions, and transported to whatsoever coast the service of God and Christendom should require ; and that the republic should join the armament with a squadron of fifty galleys. It was required, that the pilgrims should pay, before their departure, a sum of 85,000 marks of silver ; and that all conquests, by sea and land, should be equally divided between the confederates. The terms were hard ; but the emergency was pressing, and the French barons were not less profuse of money than of blood. A general assembly was convened to ratify the treaty ; the stately chapel and place of St. Mark were filled with 10,000 citizens ; and the noble deputies were taught a new lesson of humbling themselves before the majesty of the people. " Illustrious Venetians," said the marshal of Champagne, " we are sent by the greatest and most powerful barons of France, to implore the aid of the masters of the sea for the deliverance of Jerusalem. They have enjoined us to fall prostrate at your feet ; nor will we rise from the ground, till you have promised to avenge with us the injuries of Christ." The eloquence of their words and tears, their martial aspect, and suppliant attitude, were applauded by an universal shout ; as it were, says Jeffrey, by the sound of an earthquake. The venerable doge ascended the pulpit to urge their request by those motives of honour and virtue, which alone can be offered to a popular assembly ; the treaty was transcribed on parchment ; attested with oaths and seals, mutually accepted by the weeping and joyful representatives of France and Venice ; and despatched to Rome for the approbation of pope Innocent the third. Two thousand marks were borrowed of the merchants for the first expences of the armament. Of the six deputies, two repassed the Alps to announce their success, while their four companions made a fruitless trial of the zeal and emulation of the republics of Genoa and Pisa.

The execution of the treaty was still opposed by unforeseen difficulties and delays. The marshal, on his return to Troyes, was embraced and approved by Thibaut count of Champagne, who had been unanimously chosen general of the confederates. But the health of

that valiant youth already declined, and soon became hopeless ; and he deplored the untimely fate, which condemned him to expire, not in a field of battle, but on a bed of sickness. To his brave and numerous vassals, the dying prince distributed his treasures : they swore in his presence to accomplish his vow and their own ; but some there were, says the marshal, who accepted his gifts and forfeited their word. The more resolute champions of the cross held a parliament at Soissons for the election of a new general, but such was the incapacity, or jealousy, or reluctance of the princes of France, that none could be found both able and willing to assume the conduct of the enterprise. They acquiesced in the choice of a stranger, of Boniface marquis of Montserrat, descended of a race of heroes, and himself of conspicuous fame in the wars and negotiations of the times ; nor could the piety or ambition of the Italian chief decline this honourable invitation. After visiting the French court, where he was received as a friend and kinsman, the marquis, in the church of Soissons, was invested with the cross of a pilgrim and the staff of a general ; and immediately repassed the Alps, to prepare for the distant expedition of the East. About the festival of the Pentecost he displayed his banner, and marched towards Venice at the head of the Italians : he was preceded or followed by the counts of Flanders and Blois, and the most respectable barons of France ; and their numbers were swelled by the pilgrims of Germany, whose object and motives were similar to their own. The Venetians had fulfilled, and even surpassed, their engagements : stables were constructed for the horses, and barracks for the troops ; the magazines were abundantly replenished with forage and provisions ; and the fleet of transports, ships, and galleys was ready to hoist sail, as soon as the republic had received the price of the freight and armament. But that price far exceeded the wealth of the crusaders who were assembled at Venice. The Flemings, whose obedience to their count was voluntary and precarious, had embarked in their vessels for the long navigation of the ocean and Mediterranean ; and many of the French and Italians had preferred a cheaper and more convenient passage from Marseilles and Apulia to the Holy Land. Each pilgrim might complain that after he had furnished his own contribution he was made responsible for the deficiency of his absent brethren : the gold and silver plate of the chiefs, which they freely delivered to the treasury of St. Mark, was a generous but inadequate sacrifice ; and after all their efforts, 34,000 marks were still wanting to complete the stipulated sum. The obstacle was removed by the policy and patriotism of the doge, who proposed (A.D. 1202. October 8) to the barons, that if they would join their arms in reducing some revolted cities of Dalmatia, he would expose his person in the holy war, and obtain from the republic a long indulgence, till some wealthy conquest should afford the means of satisfying the debt. After much scruple and hesitation they chose

rather to accept the offer than to relinquish the enterprise ; and the first hostilities of the fleet and army were (Nov. 10) directed against Zara, a strong city of the Sclavonian coast, which had renounced its allegiance to Venice, and implored the protection of the king of Hungary. The crusaders burst the chain or boom of the harbour ; landed their horses, troops, and military engines ; and compelled the inhabitants, after a defence of five days, to surrender at discretion ; their lives were spared, but the revolt was punished by the pillage of their houses and the demolition of their walls. The season was far advanced ; the French and Venetians resolved to pass the winter in a secure harbour and plentiful country ; but their repose was disturbed by national and tumultuous quarrels of the soldiers and mariners. The conquest of Zara had scattered the seeds of discord and scandal : the arms of the allies had been stained in their outset with the blood, not of infidels, but of Christians : the king of Hungary and his new subjects were themselves enlisted under the banner of the cross ; and the scruples of the devout were magnified by the fear or lassitude of the reluctant pilgrims. The pope had excommunicated the false crusaders who had pillaged and massacred their brethren, and only the marquis Boniface and Simon of Montfort escaped these spiritual thunders ; the one by his absence from the siege, the other by his final departure from the camp. Innocent might absolve the simple and submissive penitents of France ; but he was provoked by the stubborn reason of the Venetians, who refused to confess their guilt, to accept their pardon, or to allow, in their temporal concerns, the interposition of a priest.

The assembly of such formidable powers by sea and land, had revived the hopes of young Alexius ; and, both at Venice and Zara, he solicited the arms of the crusaders, for his own restoration and his father's deliverance. The royal youth was recommended by Philip king of Germany : his prayers and presence excited the compassion of the camp ; and his cause was embraced and pleaded by the marquis of Montferrat and the doge of Venice. A double alliance, and the dignity of Cæsar, had connected with the Imperial family the two elder brothers of Boniface : he expected to derive a kingdom from the important service ; and the more generous ambition of Dandolo was eager to secure the inestimable benefits of trade and dominion that might accrue to his country. Their influence procured a favourable audience for the ambassadors of Alexius ; and if the magnitude of his offers excited some suspicion, the motives and rewards which he displayed might justify the delay and diversion of those forces which had been consecrated to the deliverance of Jerusalem. He promised, in his own and his father's name, that as soon as they should be seated on the throne of Constantinople, they would terminate the long schism of the Greeks, and submit themselves and their people to the lawful supremacy of the Roman church. He engaged to recompense

the labours and merits of the crusaders, by the immediate payment of 200,000 marks of silver ; to accompany them in person to Egypt ; or, if it should be judged more advantageous, to maintain, during a year, 10,000 men, and, during his life, 500 knights, for the service of the Holy Land. These tempting conditions were accepted by the republic of Venice ; and the eloquence of the doge and marquis persuaded the counts of Flanders, Blois, and St. Pol, with eight barons of France, to join in the glorious enterprise. A treaty of offensive and defensive alliance was confirmed by their oaths and seals ; and each individual, according to his situation and character, was swayed by the hope of public or private advantage : by the honour of restoring an exiled monarch ; or by the sincere and probable opinion, that their efforts in Palestine would be fruitless and unavailing, and that the acquisition of Constantinople must precede and prepare the recovery of Jerusalem. But they were the chiefs or equals of a valiant band of freemen and volunteers, who thought and acted for themselves : the soldiers and clergy were divided ; and, if a large majority subscribed to the alliance, the numbers and arguments of the dissidents were strong and respectable. The boldest hearts were appalled by the report of the naval power and impregnable strength of Constantinople ; and their apprehensions were disguised to the world, and perhaps to themselves, by the more decent objections of religion and duty. They alleged the sanctity of a vow, which had drawn them from their families and homes to the rescue of the holy sepulchre ; nor should the dark and crooked counsels of human policy divert them from a pursuit, the event of which was in the hands of the Almighty. Their first offence, the attack of Zara, had been severely punished by the reproach of their conscience and the censures of the pope ; nor would they again imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-Christians. The apostle of Rome had pronounced ; nor would they usurp the right of avenging with the sword the schism of the Greeks, and the doubtful usurpation of the Byzantine monarch. On these principles or pretences, many pilgrims, the most distinguished for their valour and piety, withdrew from the camp ; and their retreat was less pernicious than the open or secret opposition of a discontented party, that laboured, on every occasion, to separate the army and disappoint the enterprise.

Notwithstanding this defection, the departure of the fleet and army was vigorously pressed by the Venetians ; whose zeal for the service of the royal youth concealed a just resentment to his nation and family. They were mortified (A.D. 1203. April 7—June 24) by the recent preference which had been given to Pisa, the rival of their trade ; they had a long arrear of debt and injury to liquidate with the Byzantine court ; and Dandolo might not discourage the popular tale, that he had been deprived of his eyes by the emperor Manuel, who perfidiously violated the sanctity of an ambassador. A similar armament, for

ages, had not rode the Hadriatic : it was composed of 120 flat-bottomed vessels or *palanders* for the horses ; 240 transports filled with men and arms ; 70 storeships laden with provisions ; and 50 stout galleys, well prepared for the encounter of an enemy. While the wind was favourable, the sky serene, and the water smooth, every eye was fixed with wonder and delight on the scene of military and naval pomp which overspread the sea. The shields of the knights and squires, at once an ornament and a defence, were arranged on either side of the ships ; the banners of the nations and families were displayed from the stern ; our modern artillery was supplied by 300 engines for casting stones and darts ; the fatigues of the way were cheered with the sound of music ; and the spirits of the adventurers were raised by the mutual assurance, that 40,000 Christian heroes were equal to the conquest of the world. In the navigation from Venice and Zara, the fleet was successfully steered by the skill and experience of the Venetian pilots : at Durazzo, the confederates first landed on the territories of the Greek empire : the isle of Corfu afforded a station and repose ; they doubled without accident the perilous cape of Malea, the southern point of Peloponnesus or the Morea ; made a descent in the islands of Negropont and Andros ; and cast anchor in Abydos on the Asiatic side of the Hellespont. These preludes of conquest were easy and bloodless : the Greeks of the provinces, without patriotism or courage, were crushed by an irresistible force ; the presence of the lawful heir might justify their obedience ; and it was rewarded by the modesty and discipline of the Latins. As they penetrated through the Hellespont, the magnitude of their navy was compressed in a narrow channel ; and the face of the waters was darkened with innumerable sails. They again expanded in the bason of the Propontis, and traversed that placid sea, till they approached the European shore, at the abbey of St. Stephen, three leagues to the west of Constantinople. The prudent doge dissuaded them from dispersing themselves in a populous and hostile land ; and as their stock of provisions was reduced, it was resolved, in the season of harvest, to replenish their storeships in the fertile islands of the Propontis. With this resolution, they directed their course ; but a strong gale, and their own impatience, drove them to the eastward ; and so near did they run to the shore and the city, that some volleys of stones and darts were exchanged between the ships and the rampart. As they passed along, they gazed with admiration on the capital of the East, or, as it should seem, of the earth ; rising from her seven hills, and towering over the continents of Europe and Asia. The swelling domes and lofty spires of 500 palaces and churches were gilded by the sun and reflected in the waters ; the walls were crowded with soldiers and spectators, whose numbers they beheld, of whose temper they were ignorant ; and each heart was chilled by the reflection, that, since the beginning of the world, such an enter-

prize had never been undertaken by such an handful of warriors. But the momentary apprehension was dispelled by hope and valour ; and every man, says the marshal of Champagne, glanced his eye on the sword or lance which he must speedily use in the glorious conflict. The Latins cast anchor before Chalcedon ; the mariners only were left in the vessels ; the soldiers, horses, and arms, were safely landed ; and in the luxury of an Imperial palace, the barons tasted the first fruits of their success. On the third day, the fleet and army moved towards Scutari, the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople ; a detachment of 500 Greek horse was surprised and defeated by 80 French knights ; and in a halt of nine days, the camp was plentifully supplied with forage and provisions.

In relating the invasion of a great empire, it may seem strange that I have not described the obstacles which should have checked the progress of the strangers. The Greeks, in truth, were an unwarlike people ; but they were rich, industrious, and subject to the will of a single man : had that man been capable of fear, when his enemies were at a distance, or of courage when they approached his person. The first rumour of his nephew's alliance with the French and Venetians was despised by the usurper Alexius ; his flatterers persuaded him, that in this contempt he was bold and sincere ; and each evening, in the close of the banquet, he thrice discomfited the Barbarians of the West. These Barbarians had been justly terrified by the report of his naval power ; and the 1600 fishing boats of Constantinople could have manned a fleet, to sink them in the Hadriatic, or stop their entrance in the mouth of the Hellespont. But all force may be annihilated by the negligence of the prince and the venality of his ministers. The great duke, or admiral, made a scandalous, almost a public, auction of the sails, the masts, and the rigging ; the royal forests were reserved for the more important purpose of the chase ; and the trees, says Nicetas, were guarded by the eunuchs, like the groves of religious worship. From his dream of pride, Alexius was awakened by the siege of Zara and the rapid advances of the Latins ; as soon as he saw the danger was real, he thought it inevitable ; and his vain presumption was lost in abject despondency and despair. He suffered these contemptible Barbarians to pitch their camp in the sight of the palace ; and his apprehensions were thinly disguised by the pomp and menace of a suppliant embassy. The sovereign of the Romans was astonished (his ambassadors were instructed to say) at the hostile appearance of the strangers. If these pilgrims were sincere in their vow for the deliverance of Jerusalem, his voice must applaud, and his treasures should assist, their pious design : but should they dare to invade the sanctuary of empire, their numbers, were they ten times more considerable, should not protect them from his just resentment. The answer of the doge and barons was simple and magnanimous.

"In the cause of honour and justice," they said, "we despise the usurper of Greece, his threats, and his offers. *Our* friendship and *his* allegiance are due to the lawful heir, to the young prince who is seated among us, and to his father, the emperor Isaac, who has been deprived of his sceptre, his freedom, and his eyes, by the crime of an ungrateful brother. Let that brother confess his guilt, and implore forgiveness, and we ourselves will intercede, that he may be permitted to live in affluence and security. But let him not insult us by a second message : our reply will be made in arms, in the palace of Constantinople."

On the tenth day (July 6) of their encampment at Scutari, the crusaders prepared themselves, as soldiers and as Catholics, for the passage of the Bosphorus. Perilous indeed was the adventure ; the stream was broad and rapid : in a calm the current of the Euxine might drive down the liquid and unextinguishable fires of the Greeks ; and the opposite shores of Europe were defended by 70,000 horse and foot in formidable array. On this memorable day, which happened to be bright and pleasant, the Latins were distributed in six battles or divisions ; the first, or vanguard, was led by the count of Flanders, one of the most powerful of the Christian princes in the skill and number of his cross-bows. The four successive battles of the French were commanded by his brother Henry, the counts of St. Pol and Blois, and Matthew of Montmorency, the last of whom was honoured by the voluntary service of the marshal and nobles of Champagne. The sixth division, the rear-guard and reserve of the army, was conducted by the marquis of Montferrat, at the head of the Germans and Lombards. The chargers, saddled, with their long caparisons dragging on the ground, were embarked in the flat *palanders* ; and the knights stood by the side of their horses, in complete armour, their helmets laced, and their lances in their hands. Their numerous train of *serjeants* and archers occupied the transports ; and each transport was towed by the strength and swiftness of a galley. The six divisions traversed the Bosphorus, without encountering an enemy or an obstacle ; to land the foremost was the wish, to conquer or die was the resolution, of every division and of every soldier. Jealous of the pre-eminence of danger, the knights in their heavy armour leaped into the sea, when it rose as high as their girdle ; the serjeants and archers were animated by their valour ; and the squires, letting down the draw-bridges of the palanders, led the horses to the shore. Before the squadrons could mount, and form and couch their lances, the 70,000 Greeks had vanished from their sight ; the timid Alexius gave the example to his troops : and it was only by the plunder of his rich pavilions that the Latins were informed that they had fought against an emperor. In the first consternation of a flying enemy, they resolved by a double attack to open the entrance of the harbour.


The tower of Galata, in the suburb of Pera, was attacked and stormed by the French, while the Venetians assumed the more difficult task of forcing the boom or chain that was stretched from the tower to the Byzantine shore. After some fruitless attempts, their intrepid perseverance prevailed : twenty ships of war, the relics of the Grecian navy, were either sunk or taken : the enormous and massy links of iron were cut asunder by the shears, or broken by the weight, of the galleys ; and the Venetian fleet, safe and triumphant, rode at anchor in the port of Constantinople. By these daring achievements, a remnant of 20,000 Latins solicited the licence of besieging a capital which contained above 400,000 inhabitants, able, though not willing, to bear arms in defence of their country. Such an account would indeed suppose a population of near two millions ; but whatever abatement may be required in the numbers of the Greeks, the *belief* of those numbers will equally exalt the fearless spirit of their assailants.

In the choice of the attack, the French and Venetians were divided by their habits of life and warfare. The former affirmed with truth, that Constantinople was most accessible on the side of the sea and the harbour. The latter might assert with honour, that they had long enough trusted their lives and fortunes to a frail bark and a precarious element, and loudly demanded a trial of knighthood, a firm ground, and a close onset, either on foot or horseback. After a prudent compromise, of employing the two nations by sea and land, in the service best suited to their character, the fleet covering the army, they both proceeded from the entrance to the extremity of the harbour : the stone bridge of the river was hastily repaired ; and the six battles of the French formed their encampment against the front of the capital, the basis of the triangle which runs about four miles from the port of the Propontis. On the edge of a broad ditch, at the foot of a lofty rampart, they had leisure to contemplate the difficulties of their enterprise. The gates to the right and left of their narrow camp poured forth frequent sallies of cavalry and light-infantry, which cut off their stragglers, swept the country of provisions, sounded the alarm five or six times in the course of each day, and compelled them to plant a palisade, and sink an entrenchment, for their immediate safety. In the supplies and convoys the Venetians had been too sparing, or the Franks too voracious : the usual complaints of hunger and scarcity were heard, and perhaps felt : their stock of flour would be exhausted in three weeks ; and their disgust of salt meat tempted them to taste the flesh of their horses. The trembling usurper was supported by Theodore Lascaris, his son-in-law, a valiant youth, who aspired to save and to rule his country ; the Greeks, regardless of that country, were awakened to the defence of their religion ; but their firmest hope was in the strength and spirit of the Varangian guards, of the Danes and English, as they are named in the writers of the times. After ten days' (July 7—18

incessant labour, the ground was levelled, the ditch filled, the approaches of the besiegers were regularly made, and 250 engines of assault exercised their various powers to clear the rampart, to batter the walls and to sap the foundations. On the first appearance of a breach, the scaling ladders were applied: the numbers that defended the vantage-ground repulsed and oppressed the adventurous Latins; but they admired the resolution of fifteen knights and serjeants, who had gained the ascent, and maintained their perilous station till they were precipitated or made prisoners by the Imperial guards. On the side of the harbour the naval attack was more successfully conducted by the Venetians; and that industrious people employed every resource that was known and practised before the invention of gunpowder. A double line, three bow-shots in front, was formed by the galleys and ships; and the swift motion of the former was supported by the weight and loftiness of the latter, whose decks and poops, and turret, were the platforms of military engines, that discharged their shot over the heads of the first line. The soldiers, who leaped from the galleys on shore, immediately planted and ascended their scaling-ladders, while the large ships, advancing more slowly into the intervals, and lowering a drawbridge, opened a way through the air from their masts to the rampart. In the midst of the conflict, the doge, a venerable and conspicuous form, stood aloft in complete armour on the prow of the galley. The great standard of St. Mark was displayed before him; his threats, promises, and exhortations, urged the diligence of the rowers; his vessel was the first that struck; and Dandolo was the first warrior on the shore. The nations admired the magnanimity of the blind old man, without reflecting that his age and infirmities diminished the price of life, and enhanced the value of immortal glory. On a sudden, by an invisible hand (for the standard-bearer was probably slain), the banner of the republic was fixed on the rampart: twenty-five towers were rapidly occupied; and, by the cruel expedient of fire, the Greeks were driven from the adjacent quarter. The doge had despatched the intelligence of his success, when he was checked by the danger of his confederates. Nobly declaring that he would rather die with the pilgrims than gain a victory by their destruction, Dandolo relinquished his advantage, recalled his troops, and hastened to the scene of action. He found the six weary diminutive *battles* of the French encompassed by sixty squadrons of the Greek cavalry, the least of which was more numerous than the largest of their divisions. Shame and despair had provoked Alexius to the last effort of a general sally; but he was awed by the firm order and manly aspect of the Latins: and, after skirmishing at a distance, withdrew his troops in the close of the evening. The silence or tumult of the night exasperated his fears; and the timid usurper, collecting a treasure of 10,000 pounds of gold, basely deserted his wife, his people, and his fortune; threw him-

self into a bark, stole through the Bosphorus, and landed in shameful safety in an obscure harbour of Thrace. As soon as they were apprised of his flight, the Greek nobles sought pardon and peace in the dungeon where the blind Isaac expected each hour the visit of the executioner. Again saved and exalted by the vicissitudes of fortune, the captive in his imperial robes was replaced on the throne, and surrounded with prostrate slaves, whose real terror and affected joy he was incapable of discerning. At the dawn of day hostilities were suspended; and the Latin chiefs were surprised by a message from the lawful and reigning emperor, who was impatient to embrace his son and to reward his generous deliverers.

But these generous deliverers were unwilling to release their hostage, till they had obtained from his father the payment, or at least the promise, of their recompense. They chose four ambassadors, Matthew of Montmorency, our historian the marshal of Champagne, and two Venetians, to congratulate the emperor. The gates (July 19) were thrown open on their approach, the streets on both sides were lined with the battle-axes of the Danish and English guard: the presence-chamber glittered with gold and jewels, the false substitutes of virtue and power; by the side of the blind Isaac, his wife was seated, the sister of the king of Hungary; and by her appearance, the noble matrons of Greece were drawn from their domestic retirement, and mingled with the circle of senators and soldiers. The Latins, by the mouth of the marshal, spoke like men, conscious of their merits, but who respected, the work of their own hands; and the emperor clearly understood that his son's engagements with Venice and the pilgrims must be ratified without hesitation or delay. Withdrawing into a private chamber with the empress, a chamberlain, an interpreter, and the four ambassadors, the father of young Alexius inquired with some anxiety into the nature of his stipulations. The submission of the Eastern empire to the pope, the succour of the Holy Land, and a present contribution of 200,000 marks of silver—"These conditions are weighty," was his prudent reply; "they are hard to accept, and difficult to perform. But no conditions can exceed the measure of your services and deserts." After this satisfactory assurance, the barons mounted on horseback, and introduced the heir of Constantinople to the city and palace: his youth and marvellous adventures engaged every heart in his favour, and Alexius was solemnly crowned with his father in the dome of St. Sophia. In the first days of his reign, the people, already blessed with the restoration of plenty and peace, were delighted by the joyful catastrophe of the tragedy; and the discontent of the nobles, their regret and their fears, were covered by the polished surface of pleasure and loyalty. The mixture of two discordant nations in the same capital might have been pregnant with mischief and danger; and the suburb of Galata, or Pera, was assigned for the quarters



of the French and Venetians. But the liberty of trade and familiar intercourse was allowed between the friendly nations ; and each day the pilgrims were tempted by devotion or curiosity to visit the churches and palaces of Constantinople. Their rude minds, insensible perhaps of the finer arts, were astonished by the magnificent scenery : and the poverty of their native towns enhanced the populousness and riches of the first metropolis of Christendom. Descending from his state, young Alexius was prompted by interest and gratitude to repeat his frequent and familiar visits to his Latin allies ; and in the freedom of the table, the gay petulance of the French sometimes forgot the emperor of the East. In their more serious conferences, it was agreed, that the re-union of the two churches must be the result of patience and time ; but avarice was less tractable than zeal ; and a large sum was instantly disbursed to appease the wants, and silence the importunity, of the crusaders. Alexius was alarmed by the approaching hour of their departure : their absence might have relieved him from the engagement which he was yet incapable of performing ; but his friends would have left him, naked and alone, to the caprice and prejudice of a perfidious nation. He wished to bribe their stay, the delay of a year, by undertaking to defray their expence, and to satisfy, in their name, the freight of the Venetian vessels. The offer was agitated in the council of the barons ; and, after a repetition of their debates and scruples, a majority of votes again acquiesced in the advice of the doge and the prayer of the young emperor. At the price of 1600 pounds of gold, he prevailed on the marquis of Montferrat to lead him with an army round the provinces of Europe ; to establish his authority, and pursue his uncle, while Constantinople was awed by the presence of Baldwin and his confederates of France and Flanders. The expedition was successful ; the blind emperor exulted in the success of his arms, and listened to the predictions of his flatterers, that the same Providence which had raised him from the dungeon to the throne, would heal his gout, restore his sight, and watch over the long prosperity of his reign. Yet the mind of the suspicious old man was tormented by the rising glories of his son ; nor could his pride conceal from his envoy, that, while his own name was pronounced in faint and reluctant acclamations, the royal youth was the theme of spontaneous and universal praise.

By the recent invasion, the Greeks were awakened from a dream of nine centuries ; from the vain presumption that the capital of the Roman empire was impregnable to foreign arms. The strangers of the West had violated the city, and bestowed the sceptre, of Constantine : their Imperial clients soon became as unpopular as themselves : the well-known vices of Isaac were rendered still more contemptible by his infirmities ; and the young Alexius was hated as an apostate, who had renounced the manners and religion of his country. His

secret covenant with the Latins was divulged or suspected ; the people, and especially the clergy, were devoutly attached to their faith and superstition ; and every convent, and every shop, resounded with the danger of the church and the tyranny of the pope. An empty treasury could ill supply the demands of regal luxury and foreign extortion : the Greeks refused to avert, by a general tax, the impending evils of servitude and pillage ; the oppression of the rich excited a more dangerous and personal resentment : and if the emperor melted the plate, and despoiled the images, of the sanctuary, he seemed to justify the complaints of heresy and sacrilege. During the absence of marquis Boniface and his Imperial pupil, Constantinople was visited with a calamity which might be justly imputed to the zeal and indiscretion of the Flemish pilgrims. In one of their visits to the city, they were scandalized by the aspect of a mosque or synagogue, in which one God was worshipped, without a partner or a son. Their effectual mode of controversy was to attack the infidels with the sword, and their habitation with fire : but the infidels, and some Christian neighbours, presumed to defend their lives and properties ; and the flames which bigotry had kindled consumed the most orthodox and innocent structures. During eight days and nights, the conflagration spread above a league in front, from the harbour to the Propontis, over the thickest and most populous regions of the city. It is not easy to count the stately churches and palaces that were reduced to a smoking ruin, to value the merchandise that perished in the trading streets, or to number the families that were involved in the common destruction. By this outrage, which the doge and the barons in vain affected to disclaim, the name of the Latins became still more unpopular ; and the colony of that nation, above 15,000 persons, consulted their safety in a hasty retreat from the city to the protection of their standard in the suburb of Pera. The emperor returned in triumph ; but the firmest and most dexterous policy would have been insufficient to steer him through the tempest, which overwhelmed the person and government of that unhappy youth. His own inclination, and his father's advice, attached him to his benefactors ; but Alexius hesitated between gratitude and patriotism, between the fear of his subjects and of his allies. By his feeble and fluctuating conduct he lost the esteem and confidence of both ; and, while he invited the marquis of Montferrat to occupy the palace, he suffered the nobles to conspire, and the people to arm, for the deliverance of their country. Regardless of his painful situation, the Latin chiefs repeated their demands, resented his delays, suspected his intentions, and exacted a decisive answer of peace or war. The haughty summons was delivered by three French knights and three Venetian deputies, who girded their swords, mounted their horses, pierced through the angry multitude, and entered with a fearless countenance the palace and presence of the Greek emperor. In a peremptory tone,

they recapitulated their services and his engagements ; and boldly declared, that unless their just claims were fully and immediately satisfied, they should no longer hold him either as a sovereign or a friend. After this defiance, the first that had ever wounded an Imperial ear, they departed without betraying any symptoms of fear ; but their escape from a servile palace and a furious city astonished the ambassadors ; and their return to the camp was the signal of mutual hostility.

Among the Greeks, all authority and wisdom were overborne by the impetuous multitude, who (A.D. 1204) mistook their rage for valour, their numbers for strength, and their fanaticism for the support and inspiration of Heaven. In the eyes of both nations Alexius was false and contemptible : the base and spurious race of the Angeli was rejected with clamorous disdain ; and the people of Constantinople encompassed the senate, to demand at their hands a more worthy emperor. To every senator, conspicuous by his birth or dignity, they successively presented the purple : by each senator the deadly garment was repulsed : the contest lasted three days ; and we may learn from the historian Nicetas, one of the members of the assembly, that fear and weakness were the guardians of their loyalty. A phantom, who vanished in oblivion, was forcibly proclaimed by the crowd ; but the author of the tumult, and the leader of the war, was a prince of the house of Ducas ; and his common appellation of Alexius must be discriminated by the epithet of Mourzoufle, which in the vulgar idiom expressed the close junction of his black and shaggy eyebrows. At once a patriot and a courtier, the perfidious Mourzoufle, who was not destitute of cunning and courage, opposed the Latins both in speech and action, inflamed the passions and prejudices of the Greeks, and insinuated himself into the favour and confidence of Alexius, who trusted him with the office of great chamberlain, and tinged his buskins with the colours of royalty. At the dead of night he rushed into the bed-chamber with an affrighted aspect, exclaiming, that the palace was attacked by the people and betrayed by the guards. Starting from his couch, the unsuspecting prince threw himself into the arms of his enemy, who had contrived his escape by a private staircase. But that staircase terminated in a prison ; Alexius was (Feb. 8) seized, stripped, and loaded with chains ; and, after tasting some days the bitterness of death, he was poisoned, or strangled, or beaten with clubs, at the command, and in the presence, of the tyrant. The emperor Isaac Angelus soon followed his son to the grave, and Mourzoufle, perhaps, might spare the superfluous crime of hastening the extinction of impotence and blindness.

The death of the emperors, and the usurpation of Mourzoufle, had changed the nature of the quarrel. It was no longer the disagreement of allies who over-valued their services, or neglected their obligations : the French and Venetians forgot their complaints against

Alexius, dropt a tear on the untimely fate of their companion, and swore revenge against the perfidious nation who had crowned his assassin. Yet the prudent doge was still inclined to negotiate ; he asked as a debt, a subsidy, or a fine, 50,000 pounds of gold, about £2,000,000 ; nor would the conference have been abruptly broken, if the zeal, or policy, of Mourzoufle had not refused to sacrifice the Greek church to the safety of the state. Amidst the invective of his foreign and domestic enemies, we may discern, that he was not unworthy of the character which he had assumed, of the public champion : the second siege (Jan.—April) of Constantinople was far more laborious than the first ; the treasury was replenished, and discipline was restored, by a severe inquisition into the abuses of the former reign ; and Mourzoufle, an iron mace in his hand, visiting the posts, and affecting the port and aspect of a warrior, was an object of terror to his soldiers, at least, and to his kinsmen. Before and after the death of Alexius, the Greeks made two vigorous and well-conducted attempts to burn the navy in the harbour ; but the skill and courage of the Venetians repulsed the fire-ships ; and the vagrant flames wasted themselves without injury in the sea. In a nocturnal sally the Greek emperor was vanquished by Henry, brother of the count of Flanders : the advantages of number and surprise aggravated the shame of his defeat ; his buckler was found on the field of battle ; and the Imperial standard, a divine image of the Virgin, was presented, as a trophy and a relic, to the Cistercian monks, the disciples of St. Bernard. Near three months, without excepting the holy season of Lent, were consumed in skirmishes and preparations, before the Latins were ready or resolved for a general assault. The land-fortifications had been found impregnable ; and the Venetian pilots represented, that, on the shore of the Propontis, the anchorage was unsafe, and the ships must be driven by the current far away to the straits of the Hellespont ; a prospect not displeasing to the reluctant pilgrims, who sought every opportunity of breaking the army. From the harbour, therefore, the assault was determined by the assailants, and expected by the besieged ; and the emperor had placed his scarlet pavilions on a neighbouring height, to direct and animate the efforts of his troops. A fearless spectator, whose mind could entertain the ideas of pomp and pleasure, might have admired the long array of two embattled armies, which extended above half a league, the one on the ships and galleys, the other on the walls and towers raised above the ordinary level by several stages of wooden turrets. Their first fury was spent in the discharge of darts, stones, and fire, from the engines ; but the water was deep ; the French were bold ; the Venetians were skilful ; they approached the walls ; and a desperate conflict of swords, spears, and battle-axes, was fought on the trembling bridges that grappled the floating, to the stable, batteries. In more than an hundred places,

the assault was urged, and the defence was sustained ; till the superiority of ground and numbers finally prevailed, and the Latin trumpets sounded a retreat. On the ensuing days, the attack was renewed with equal vigour, and a similar event ; and in the night, the doge and the barons held a council, apprehensive only for the public danger : not a voice pronounced the words of escape or treaty ; and each warrior, according to his temper, embraced the hope of victory or the assurance of a glorious death. By the experience of the former siege, the Greeks were instructed, but the Latins were animated ; and the knowledge that Constantinople *might* be taken, was of more avail than the local precautions which that knowledge had inspired for its defence. In the third assault, two ships were linked together to double their strength ; a strong north wind drove them on the shore ; the bishops of Troyes and Soissons led the van ; and the auspicious names of the *pilgrim* and the *paradise* resounded along the line. The episcopal banners were displayed on the walls ; an hundred marks of silver had been promised to the first adventurers ; and if their reward was intercepted by death, their names have been immortalized by fame. Four towers were scaled ; three gates were burst open ; and the French knights, who might tremble on the waves, felt themselves invincible on horseback on the solid ground. Shall I relate that the thousands who guarded the emperor's person fled on the approach and before the lance of a single warrior ? Their ignominious flight is attested by their countryman Nicetas ; an army of phantoms marched with the French hero, and he was magnified to a giant in the eyes of the Greeks. While the fugitives deserted their posts and cast away their arms, the Latins entered the city under the banners of their leaders : the streets and gates opened for their passage ; and either design or accident kindled a third conflagration, which consumed in a few hours the measure of three of the largest cities of France. In the close of evening, the barons checked their troops and fortified their stations ; they were awed by the extent and populousness of the capital, which might yet require the labour of a month, if the churches and palaces were conscious of their internal strength. But in the morning, a suppliant procession, with crosses and images, announced the submission of the Greeks, and deprecated the wrath of the conquerors ; the usurper escaped through the golden gate ; the palaces of Blachernæ and Boucoleon were occupied by the count of Flanders and the marquis of Montferrat ; and the empire which still bore the name of Constantine, and the title of Roman, was subverted by the arms of the Latin pilgrims.

Constantinople had been taken by storm ; and no restraints, except those of religion and humanity, were imposed on the conquerors by the laws of war. Boniface marquis of Montferrat still acted as their general ; and the Greeks, who revered his name as that of their future

sovereign, were heard to exclaim in a lamentable tone, "Holy marquis-king, have mercy upon us !" His prudence or compassion opened the gates of the city to the fugitives ; and he exhorted the soldiers of the cross to spare the lives of their fellow-Christians. The streams of blood that flow down the pages of Nicetas may be reduced to the slaughter of 2000 of his unresisting countrymen ; and the greater part was massacred, not by the strangers, but by the Latins, who had been driven from the city, and who exercised the revenge of a triumphant faction. Yet of these exiles, some were less mindful of injuries than of benefits ; and Nicetas himself was indebted for his safety to the generosity of a Venetian merchant. Pope Innocent the third accuses the pilgrims of respecting neither age nor sex, nor religious profession ; and bitterly laments that the deeds of darkness were perpetrated in open day. It is indeed probable that the licence of victory prompted and covered a multitude of sins ; the marquis of Montferrat was the patron of discipline and decency ; the count of Flanders was the mirror of chastity : they had forbidden, under pain of death, the rape of married women, or virgins, or nuns ; and the proclamation was sometimes invoked by the vanquished, and respected by the victors. Their cruelty and lust were moderated by the authority of the chiefs, and feelings of the soldiers ; for we are no longer describing an irruption of the northern savages ; and however ferocious they might still appear, time, policy, and religion, had civilized the manners of the French, and still more of the Italians. But a free scope was allowed to their avarice, which was glutted, even in the holy week, by the pillage of Constantinople. The right of victory, unshackled by any promise or treaty, had confiscated the public and private wealth of the Greeks ; and every hand, according to its size and strength, might lawfully execute the sentence and seize the forfeiture. A portable and universal standard of exchange was found in the coined and uncoined metals of gold and silver, which each captor at home or abroad might convert into the possessions most suitable to his temper and situation. Of the treasures, which trade and luxury had accumulated, the silks, velvets, furs, the gems, spices, and rich movables, were the most precious, as they could not be procured for money in the ruder countries of Europe. An order of rapine was instituted ; nor was the share of each individual abandoned to industry or chance. Under the tremendous penalties of perjury, excommunication, and death, the Latins were bound to deliver their plunder into the common stock ; three churches were selected for the deposit and distribution of the spoil : a single share was allotted to a foot soldier ; two for a serjeant on horseback ; four to a knight ; and larger proportions according to the rank and merit of the barons and princes. For violating this sacred engagement, a knight belonging to the count of St. Pol was hanged with his shield and coat of arms

round his neck : his example might render similar offenders more artful and discreet ; but avarice was more powerful than fear ; and it is generally believed, that the secret far exceeded the acknowledged plunder. Yet the magnitude of the prize surpassed the largest scale of experience or expectation. After the whole had been equally divided between the French and Venetians, 50,000 marks were deducted to satisfy the debts of the former and the demands of the latter. The residue of the French amounted to 400,000 marks of silver, about £800,000 ; nor can I better appreciate the value of that sum in the public and private transactions of the age, than by defining it as seven times the annual revenue of the kingdom of England.

In this great revolution we enjoy the singular felicity of comparing the narratives of Villehardouin and Nicetas, the opposite feelings of the marshal of Champagne and the Byzantine senator. At the first view it should seem that the wealth of Constantinople was only transferred from one nation to another ; and that the loss and sorrow of the Greeks is exactly balanced by the joy and advantage of the Latins. But in the miserable account of war, the gain is never equivalent to the loss, the pleasure to the pain : the smiles of the Latins were transient and fallacious ; the Greeks for ever wept over the ruins of their country ; and their real calamities were aggravated by sacrilege and mockery. What benefits accrued to the conquerors from the three fires which annihilated so vast a portion of the buildings and riches of the city ! What a stock of such things as could neither be used nor transported, was maliciously or wantonly destroyed ! How much treasure was idly wasted in gaming, debauchery, and riot ! And what precious objects were bartered for a vile price by the impatience or ignorance of the soldiers, whose reward was stolen by the base industry of the last of the Greeks ! Those alone, who had nothing to lose, might derive some profit from the revolution ; but the misery of the upper ranks of society is strongly painted in the personal adventures of Nicetas himself. His stately palace had been reduced to ashes in the second conflagration ; and the senator, with his family and friends, found an obscure shelter in another house which he possessed near the church of St. Sophia. It was the door of this mean habitation that his friend the Venetian merchant guarded in the disguise of a soldier, till Nicetas could save, by a precipitate flight, the relics of his fortune and the chastity of his daughter. In a cold wintry season, these fugitives, nursed in the lap of prosperity, departed on foot ; his wife was with child ; the desertion of their slaves compelled them to carry their baggage on their own shoulders ; and their women, whom they placed in the centre, were exhorted to conceal their beauty with dirt, instead of adorning it with paint and jewels. Every step was exposed to insult and danger ; the threats of the strangers were less painful than the taunts of the plebeians, with whom they were now levelled ;

nor did the exiles breathe in safety till their mournful pilgrimage was concluded at Selymbria, above forty miles from the capital. On their way they overtook the patriarch, without attendance and almost without apparel, riding on an ass, and reduced to a state of apostolical poverty, which, had it been voluntary, might perhaps have been meritorious. In the mean while, his desolate churches were profaned by the licentiousness and party zeal of the Latins. After stripping the gems and pearls, they converted the chalices into drinking-cups; their tables, on which they gamed and feasted, were covered with the pictures of Christ and the saints; and they trampled under foot the most venerable objects of the Christian worship. In the cathedral of St. Sophia, the ample veil of the sanctuary was rent asunder for the sake of the golden fringe; and the altar, a monument of art and riches, was broken in pieces and shared among the captors. Their mules and horses were laden with the wrought silver and gilt carvings, which they tore down from the doors and pulpit; and if the beasts stumbled under the burthen, they were stabbed by their impatient drivers, and the holy pavement streamed with their impure blood. Nor were the repositories of the royal dead secure from violation: in the church of the apostles, the tombs of the emperors were rifled; and it is said, that after six centuries the corpse of Justinian was found without any signs of decay or putrefaction. In the streets, the French and Flemings clothed themselves and their horses in painted robes and flowing head-dresses of linen; and the coarse intemperance of their feasts insulted the splendid sobriety of the East. To expose the arms of a people of scribes, they affected to display a pen, an ink-horn, and a sheet of paper, without discerning that the instruments of science and valour were *alike* feeble and useless in the hands of the modern Greeks.

Their reputation and their language encouraged them, however, to despise the ignorance, and to overlook the progress, of the Latins. In the love of the arts, the national difference was still more obvious and real; the Greeks preserved with reverence the works of their ancestors, which they could not imitate; and, in the destruction of the statues of Constantinople, we are provoked to join in the complaints and invectives of the Byzantine historian. We have seen how the rising city was adorned by the vanity and despotism of the Imperial founder: in the ruins of paganism, some gods and heroes were saved from the axe of superstition; and the forum and hippodrome were dignified with the relics of a better age. Several of these are described by Nicetas in a florid and affected style; and, from his descriptions, I shall select some interesting particulars. 1. The victorious chariot-eers were cast in bronze, at their own, or the public, charge, and fitly placed in the hippodrome: they stood aloft in their chariots, wheeling round the goal; the spectators could admire their attitude, and judge of the resemblance; and of these figures, the most perfect might have

been transported from the Olympic stadium. 2. The sphinx, river-horse, and crocodile, denote the climate and manufacture of Egypt, and the spoils of that ancient province. 3. The she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus ; a subject alike pleasing to the *old* and the *new* Romans ; but which could rarely be treated before the decline of the Greek sculpture. 4. An eagle holding and tearing a serpent in his talons ; a domestic monument of the Byzantines, which they ascribed not to a human artist, but to the magic power of the philosopher Apollonius, who, by this talisman, delivered the city from such venomous reptiles. 5. An ass and his driver ; which were erected by Augustus in his colony of Nicopolis, to commemorate a verbal omen of the victory of Actium. 6. An equestrian statue ; which passed, in the vulgar opinion, for Joshua, the Jewish conqueror, stretching out his hand to stop the course of the descending sun. A more classical tradition recognized the figures of Bellerophon and Pegasus ; and the free attitude of the steed seemed to mark that he trod on air, rather than on the earth. 7. A square and lofty obelisk of brass ; the sides were embossed with a variety of picturesque and rural scenes : birds singing ; rustics labouring, or playing on their pipes ; sheep bleating ; lambs skipping ; the sea, and a scene of fish and fishing ; little naked cupids laughing, playing, and pelting each other with apples ; and, on the summit, a female figure turning with the slightest breath, and thence denominated *the wind's attendant*. 8. The Phrygian shepherd presenting to Venus the prize of beauty, the apple of discord. 9. The incomparable statue of Helen ; which is delineated by Nicetas in the words of admiration and love : her well-turned feet, snowy arms, rosy lips, bewitching smiles, swimming eyes, arched eye-brows, the harmony of her shape, the lightness of her drapery, and her flowing locks that waved in the wind : a beauty that might have moved her Barbarian destroyers to pity and remorse. 10. The manly or divine form of Hercules, as he was restored to life by the master-hand of Lysippus ; of such magnitude, that his thumb was equal to the waist, his leg to the stature, of a common man ; his chest ample, his shoulders broad, his limbs strong and muscular, his hair curled, his aspect commanding. Without his bow, or quiver, or club, his lion's skin carelessly thrown over him, he was seated on an osier basket, his right leg and arm stretched to the utmost, his left knee bent, and supporting his elbow, his head reclining on his left hand, his countenance indignant and pensive. 11. A colossal statue of Juno, which had once adorned her temple of Samos ; the enormous head by four yoke of oxen was laboriously drawn to the palace. 12. Another colossus, of Pallas or Minerva, thirty feet in height, and representing with admirable spirit the attributes and character of the martial maid. Before we accuse the Latins, it is just to remark, that this Pallas was destroyed after the first siege, by the fear and superstition of the Greeks them-

selves. The other statues of brass which I have enumerated, were broken and melted by the unfeeling avarice of the crusaders : the cost and labour were consumed in a moment ; the soul of genius evaporated in smoke ; and the remnant of base metal was coined into money for the payment of the troops. Bronze is not the most durable of monuments : from the marble forms of Phidias and Praxiteles, the Latins might turn aside with stupid contempt ; but unless they were crushed by some accidental injury, those useless stones stood secure on their pedestals. The most enlightened of the strangers, above the gross and sensual pursuits of their countrymen, more piously exercised the right of conquest in the search and seizure of the relics of the saints. Immense was the supply of heads and bones, crosses and images, that were scattered by this revolution over the churches of Europe ; and such was the increase of pilgrimage and oblation, that no branch, perhaps, of more lucrative plunder was imported from the East. Of the writings of antiquity, many that still existed in the twelfth century are now lost. But the pilgrims were not solicitous to save or transport the volumes of an unknown tongue : the perishable substance of paper or parchment can only be preserved by the multiplicity of copies ; the literature of the Greeks had almost centred in the metropolis : and, without computing the extent of our loss, we may drop a tear over the libraries that have perished in the triple fire of Constantinople.

After the death of the lawful princes, the French and Venetians, confident of justice and victory, agreed to divide and regulate their future possessions. It was stipulated by treaty, that twelve electors, six of either nation, should be nominated ; that a majority should chuse the emperor of the East ; and that, if the votes were equal, the decision of chance should ascertain the successful candidate. To him, with all the titles and prerogatives of the Byzantine throne, they assigned the two palaces of Boucoleon and Blachernæ, with a fourth part of the Greek monarchy. It was defined that the three remaining portions should be equally shared between the republic of Venice and the barons of France ; that each feudatory, with an honourable exception for the doge, should acknowledge and perform the duties of homage and military service to the supreme head of the empire : that the nation which gave an emperor, should resign to their brethren the choice of a patriarch ; and that the pilgrims, whatever might be their impatience to visit the Holy Land, should devote another year to the conquest and defence of the Greek provinces. After the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins, the treaty was confirmed and executed, and the first and most important step was the creation of an emperor. The six electors of the French nation were all ecclesiastics, the abbot of Loces, the archbishop elect of Acre in Palestine, and the bishops of Troyes, Soissons, Halberstadt, and Bethlehem, the last of whom exercised in the camp the office of pope's legate : their profession and

knowledge were respectable ; and as *they* could not be the objects, they were best qualified to be the authors, of the choice. The six Venetians were the principal servants of the state, and in this list the noble families of Querini and Contarini are still proud to discover their ancestors. The twelve assembled in the chapel of the palace ; and after the solemn invocation of the Holy Ghost, they proceeded to deliberate and vote. A just impulse of respect and gratitude prompted them to crown the virtues of the doge ; his wisdom had inspired their enterprise ; and the most youthful knights might envy and applaud the exploits of blindness and age. But the patriot Dandolo was devoid of all personal ambition, and fully satisfied that he had been judged worthy to reign. His nomination was over-ruled by the Venetians themselves ; his countrymen, and perhaps his friends, represented, with the eloquence of truth, the mischiefs that might arise to national freedom and the common cause, from the union of two incompatible characters, of the first magistrate of a republic and the emperor of the East. The exclusion of the doge left room for the more equal merits of Boniface and Baldwin ; and at their names all meaner candidates respectfully withdrew. The marquis of Montferrat was recommended by his mature age and fair reputation, by the choice of the adventurers and the wishes of the Greeks ; nor can I believe that Venice, the mistress of the sea, could be seriously apprehensive of a petty lord at the foot of the Alps. But the count of Flanders was the chief of a wealthy and warlike people ; he was valiant and pious ; in the prime of life, since he was only thirty-two years of age, a descendant of Charlemagne, a cousin of the king of France, and a compeer of the prelates and barons who had yielded with reluctance to the command of a foreigner. Without the chapel, these barons, with the doge and marquis at their head, expected the decision of the twelve electors. It was (A.D. 1204. May 9—16) announced by the bishop of Soissons, in the name of his colleagues : “Ye have sworn to obey the prince whom we should chuse ; by our unanimous suffrage, Baldwin count of Flanders and Hainault is now your sovereign, and the emperor of the East.” He was saluted with loud applause, and the proclamation was re-echoed through the city by the joy of the Latins and the trembling adulation of the Greeks. Boniface was the first to kiss the hand of his rival, and to raise him on the buckler ; and Baldwin was transported to the cathedral, and solemnly invested with the purple buskins. At the end of three weeks he was crowned by the legate, in the vacancy of a patriarch ; but the Venetian clergy soon filled the chapter of St. Sophia, seated Thomas Morosini on the ecclesiastical throne, and employed every art to perpetuate in their own nation the honours and benefices of the Greek church. Without delay, the successor of Constantine instructed Palestine, France, and Rome of this memorable revolution. To Palestine he sent, as a trophy, the gates

of Constantinople, and the chain of the harbour ; and adopted, from the Assise of Jerusalem, the laws or customs best adapted to a French colony and conquest in the East. In his epistles, the natives of France are encouraged to swell that colony, and to secure that conquest, to people a magnificent city and a fertile land, which will reward the labours both of the priest and the soldier. He congratulates the Roman pontiff on the restoration of his authority in the East ; invites him to extinguish the Greek schism by his presence in a general council ; and implores his blessing and forgiveness for the disobedient pilgrims. Prudence and dignity are blended in the answer of Innocent. In the subversion of the Byzantine empire, he arraigns the vices of man, and adores the providence of God : the conquerors will be absolved or condemned by their future conduct ; the validity of their treaty depends on the judgment of St. Peter ; but he inculcates their most sacred duty of establishing a just subordination of obedience and tribute, from the Greeks to the Latins, from the magistrate to the clergy, and from the clergy to the pope.

In the division of the Greek provinces, the share of the Venetians was more ample than that of the Latin emperor. No more than one fourth was appropriated to his domain : a clear moiety of the remainder was reserved for Venice ; and the other moiety was distributed among the adventurers of France and Lombardy. The venerable Dandolo was proclaimed despot of Romania, and invested after the Greek fashion with the purple buskins. He ended at Constantinople his long and glorious life ; and if the prerogative was personal, the title was used by his successors till the middle of the fourteenth century, with the singular though true addition of lords of one fourth and a half of the Roman empire. The doge, a slave of state, was seldom permitted to depart from the helm of the republic ; but his place was supplied by the *bail* or regent, who exercised a supreme jurisdiction over the colony of Venetians : they possessed three of the eight quarters of the city ; and his independent tribunal was composed of six judges, four counsellors, two chamberlains, two fiscal advocates, and a constable. Their long experience of the eastern trade enabled them to select their portion with discernment : they had rashly accepted the dominion and defence of Hadrianople ; but it was the more reasonable aim of their policy to form a chain of factories, and cities, and islands, along the maritime coast, from the neighbourhood of Ragusa to the Hellespont and the Bosphorus. The labour and cost of such extensive conquests exhausted their treasury : they abandoned their maxims of government, adopted a feudal system, and contented themselves with the homage of their nobles, for the possessions which these private vassals undertook to reduce and maintain. And thus it was, that the family of Sanut acquired the duchy of Naxos, which involved the greatest part of the Archipelago. For the price of 10,000

marks, the republic purchased of the marquis of Montferrat the fertile island of Crete or Candia with the ruins of an hundred cities : but its improvement was stinted by the proud and narrow spirit of an aristocracy ; and the wisest senators would confess that the sea, not the land, was the treasury of St. Mark. In the moiety of the adventurers, the marquis Boniface might claim the most liberal reward ; and, besides the isle of Crete, his exclusion from the throne was compensated by the royal title and the provinces beyond the Hellespont. But he prudently exchanged that distant and difficult conquest for the kingdom of Thessalonica or Macedonia, twelve days' journey from the capital, where he might be supported by the neighbouring powers of his brother-in-law the king of Hungary. His progress was hailed by the voluntary or reluctant acclamations of the natives ; and Greece, the proper and ancient Greece, again received a Latin conqueror, who trod with indifference that classic ground. He viewed with a careless eye the beauties of the valley of Tempe ; traversed with a cautious step the straits of Thermopylæ ; occupied the unknown cities of Thebes, Athens, and Argos ; and assaulted the fortifications of Corinth and Napoli, which resisted his arms. The lots of the Latin pilgrims were regulated by chance, or choice, or subsequent exchange ; and they abused, with intemperate joy, their triumph over the lives and fortunes of a great people. After a minute survey of the provinces, they weighed in the scales of avarice the revenue of each district, the advantage of the situation, and the ample or scanty supplies for the maintenance of soldiers and horses. Their presumption claimed and divided the long-lost dependencies of the Roman sceptre : the Nile and Euphrates rolled through their imaginary realms ; and happy was the warrior who drew for his prize the palace of the Turkish sultan of Iconium. I shall not descend to the pedigree of families and the rent-roll of estates, but I wish to specify that the counts of Blois and St. Pol were invested with the duchy of Nice and the lordship of Demotica : the principal fiefs were held by the service of constable, chamberlain, cup-bearer, butler, and chief cook ; and our historian, Jeffrey of Villehardouin, obtained a fair establishment on the banks of the Hebrus, and united the double office of marshal of Champagne and Romania. At the head of his knights and archers, each baron mounted on horseback to secure the possession of his share, and their first efforts were generally successful. But the public force was weakened by their dispersion ; and a thousand quarrels must arise under a law, and among men, whose sole umpire was the sword. Within three months after the conquest of Constantinople, the emperor and the king of Thessalonica drew their hostile followers into the field ; they were reconciled by the authority of the doge, the advice of the marshal, and the firm freedom of their peers.

Two fugitives, who had reigned at Constantinople, still asserted the

title of emperor ; and the subjects of their fallen throne might be moved to pity by the misfortunes of the elder Alexius, or excited to revenge by the spirit of Mourzoufle. A domestic alliance (A.D. 1204, &c.), a common interest, a similar guilt, and the merit of extinguishing his enemies, a brother and a nephew, induced the more recent usurper to unite with the former the relics of his power. Mourzoufle was received with smiles and honours in the camp of his father Alexius ; but the wicked can never love, and should rarely trust, their fellow-criminals : he was seized in the bath, deprived of his eyes, stripped of his troops and treasures, and turned out to wander an object of horror and contempt to those who with more propriety could hate, and with more justice could punish, the assassin of the emperor Isaac, and his son. As the tyrant, pursued by fear or remorse, was stealing over to Asia, he was seized by the Latins of Constantinople, and condemned, after an open trial, to an ignominious death. His judges debated the mode of his execution, the axe, the wheel, or the stake ; and it was resolved that Mourzoufle should ascend the Theodosian column, a pillar of white marble of one hundred and forty-seven feet in height. From the summit he was cast down headlong, and dashed in pieces on the pavement, in the presence of innumerable spectators, who filled the forum of Taurus, and admired the accomplishment of an old prediction, which was explained by this singular event. The fate of Alexius is less tragical : he was sent by the marquis a captive to Italy, and a gift to the king of the Romans ; but he had not much to applaud his fortune, if the sentence of imprisonment and exile were changed from a fortress in the Alps to a monastery in Asia. But his daughter, before the national calamity, had been given in marriage to a young hero who continued the succession, and restored the throne, of the Greek princes. The valour of Theodore Lascaris (A.D. 1204—1222), was signalized in the two sieges of Constantinople. After the flight of Mourzoufle, when the Latins were already in the city, he offered himself as their emperor to the soldiers and people : and his ambition, which might be virtuous, was undoubtedly brave. Could he have infused a soul into the multitude, they might have crushed the strangers under their feet : their abject despair refused his aid, and Theodore retired to breath the air of freedom in Anatolia, beyond the immediate view and pursuit of the conquerors. Under the title, at first of despot, and afterwards of emperor, he drew to his standard the bolder spirits, who were fortified against slavery by the contempt of life ; and as every means was lawful for the public safety, implored, without scruple, the alliance of the Turkish sultan. Nice, where Theodore established his residence, Prusa and Philadelphia, Smyrna and Ephesus, opened their gates to their deliverer : he derived strength and reputation from his victories, and even from his defeats, and the successor of Constantine preserved a fragment of the empire from the

banks of the Mæander to the suburbs of Nicomedia, and at length of Constantinople. Another portion, distant and obscure, was possessed by the lineal heir of the Comneni, a son of the virtuous Manuel, a grandson of the tyrant Andronicus. His name was Alexius ; and the epithet of great was applied perhaps to his stature, rather than to his exploits. By the indulgence of the Angeli, he was appointed governor or duke of Trebizond : his birth gave him ambition, the revolution independence ; and without changing his title, he reigned in peace from Sinope to the Phasis, along the coast of the Black Sea. His nameless son and successor is described as the vassal of the sultan, whom he served with two hundred lances ; that Comnenian prince was no more than duke of Trebizond, and the title of Emperor was first assumed by the pride and envy of the grandson of Alexius. In the West a third fragment was saved from the common shipwreck by Michael, a bastard of the house of Angeli, who, before the revolution, had been known as an hostage, a soldier, and a rebel. His flight from the camp of the marquis Boniface secured his freedom ; by his marriage with the governor's daughter, he commanded the important place of Durazzo, assumed the title of despot, and founded a strong and conspicuous principality in Epirus, Ætolia, and Thessaly, which have ever been peopled by a warlike race. The Greeks who had offered their service to their new sovereigns, were excluded by the haughty Latins from all civil and military honours, as a nation born to tremble and obey. Their resentment prompted them to show that they might have been useful friends, since they could be dangerous enemies : their nerves were braced by adversity : whatever was learned or holy, whatever was noble or valiant, rolled away into the independent states of Trebizond, Epirus, and Nice ; and a single patrician is marked by the ambiguous praise of attachment and loyalty to the Franks. The vulgar herd of the cities and the country, would have gladly submitted to a mild and regular servitude ; and the transient disorders of war would have been obliterated by some years of industry and peace. But peace was banished, and industry was crushed, in the disorders of the feudal system. The *Roman* emperors of Constantinople, if they were endowed with abilities, were armed with power for the protection of their subjects : their laws were wise, and their administration was simple. The Latin throne was filled by a titular prince, the chief, and often the servant, of his licentious confederates : the fiefs of the empire, from a kingdom to a castle, were held and ruled by the sword of the barons : and their discord, poverty, and ignorance extended the ramifications of tyranny to the most sequestered villages. The Greeks were oppressed by the double weight of the priest, who was invested with temporal power, and of the soldier, who was inflamed by fanatic hatred : and the insuperable bar of religion and language for ever separated the stranger and the

native. As long as the crusaders were united at Constantinople, the memory of their conquest, and the terror of their arms, imposed silence on the captive land : their dispersion betrayed the smallness of their numbers and the defects of their discipline ; and some failures and mischances revealed the secret, that they were not invincible. As the fear of the Greeks abated, their hatred increased. They murmured ; they conspired ; and before a year of slavery had elapsed, they implored, or accepted, the succour of a Barbarian, whose power they had felt, and whose gratitude they trusted.

The Latin conquerors had been saluted with a solemn and early embassy from John, or Joannice, or Calo-John, the revolted chief of the Bulgarians and Walachians. He deemed (A.D. 1205) himself their brother, as the votary of the Roman pontiff, from whom he had received the regal title and an holy banner ; and in the subversion of the Greek monarchy, he might aspire to the name of their friend and accomplice. But Calo-John was astonished to find, that the count of Flanders had assumed the pomp and pride of the successors of Constantine ; and his ambassadors were dismissed with an haughty message, that the rebel must deserve a pardon, by touching with his forehead the footstool of the imperial throne. His resentment would have exhaled in acts of violence and blood ; his cooler policy watched the rising discontent of the Greeks ; affected a tender concern for their sufferings ; and promised, that their first struggles for freedom should be supported by his person and kingdom. The conspiracy was propagated by national hatred, the firmest band of association and secrecy : the Greeks were impatient to sheath their daggers in the breasts of the victorious strangers ; but the execution was prudently delayed, till Henry, the emperor's brother, had transported the flower of his troops beyond the Hellespont. Most of the towns and villages of Thrace were true to the moment and the signal : and the Latins, without arms or suspicion, were slaughtered by the vile and merciless revenge of their slaves. From Demotica, the first scene of the massacre, the surviving vassals of the count of St. Pol escaped to Hadrianople ; but the French and Venetians, who occupied that city, were slain or expelled by the furious multitude ; the garrisons that could effect their retreat fell back on each other towards the metropolis ; and the fortresses, that separately stood against the rebels, were ignorant of each other's and of their sovereign's fate. The voice of fame and fear announced the revolt of the Greeks and the rapid approach of their Bulgarian ally ; and Calo-John, not depending wholly on his own kingdom, had drawn from the Scythian wilderness a body of 14,000 Comans, who drank, as it was said, the blood of their captives, and sacrificed the Christians on the altars of their gods.

Alarmed by this sudden and growing danger, the emperor dispatched a swift messenger to recall count Henry and his troops ;

and had Baldwin expected the return of his gallant brother, with a supply of 20,000 Armenians, he might have encountered the invader with equal numbers and a decisive superiority of arms and discipline. But the spirit of chivalry could seldom discriminate caution from cowardice ; and the emperor took (March) the field with an hundred and forty knights, and their train of archers and serjeants. The marshal, who dissuaded and obeyed, led the vanguard in their march to Hadrianople ; the main body was commanded by the count of Blois ; the aged doge of Venice followed with the rear ; and their scanty numbers were increased from all sides by the fugitive Latins. They undertook to besiege the rebels of Hadrianople ; and such was the pious tendency of the crusades, that they employed the holy week in pillaging the country for their subsistence, and in framing engines for the destruction of their fellow-Christians. But the Latins were soon interrupted and alarmed by the light cavalry of the Comans, who boldly skirmished to the edge of their imperfect lines : and a proclamation was issued by the marshal of Romania, that, on the trumpet's sound, the cavalry should mount and form ; but that none, under pain of death, should abandon themselves to a desultory and dangerous pursuit. This wise injunction was first disobeyed by the count of Blois, who involved the emperor in his rashness and ruin. The Comans, of the Parthian or Tartar school, fled before their first charge ; but after a career of two leagues, when the knights and their horses were almost breathless, they suddenly turned, rallied, and encompassed the heavy squadrons of the Franks. The count was slain on the field ; the emperor was (A.D. 1205, April 15) made prisoner ; and if the one disdained to fly, if the other refused to yield, their personal bravery made a poor atonement for their neglect of the duties of a general.

Proud of his victory and his royal prize, the Bulgarian advanced to relieve Hadrianople and achieve the destruction of the Latins. They must inevitably have been destroyed, if the marshal of Romania had not displayed a cool courage and consummate skill ; uncommon in all ages, but most uncommon in those times, when war was a passion, rather than a science. His grief and fears were poured into the firm and faithful bosom of the doge ; but in the camp he diffused an assurance of safety, which could only be realized by the general belief. All day he maintained his perilous station between the city and the Barbarians : Villehardouin decamped in silence, at the dead of night ; and his masterly retreat of three days would have deserved the praise of Xenophon and the ten thousand. In the rear the marshal supported the weight of the pursuit ; in the front he moderated the impatience of the fugitives ; and wherever the Comans approached, they were repelled by a line of impenetrable spears. On the third day, the weary troops beheld the sea, the solitary town of Rodosto, and their friends, who had landed from the Asiatic shore. They em-

braced, they wept ; but they united their arms and counsels ; and, in his brother's absence, count Henry assumed the regency of the empire, at once in a state of childhood and caducity. If the Comans withdrew from the summer heats, 7000 Latins, in the hour of danger, deserted Constantinople, their brethren, and their vows. Some partial success was overbalanced by the loss of 120 knights in the field of Rusium ; and of the Imperial domain, no more was left, than the capital, with two or three adjacent fortresses on the shores of Europe and Asia. The king of Bulgaria was resistless and inexorable ; and Calo-John respectfully eluded the demands of the pope, who conjured his new proselyte to restore peace and the emperor to the afflicted Latins. The deliverance of Baldwin was no longer, he said, in the power of man : that prince had died in prison ; and the manner of his death is variously related by ignorance and credulity. About twenty years afterwards, in a wood of the Netherlands, an hermit announced himself as the true Baldwin, the emperor of Constantinople, and lawful sovereign of Flanders. He related the wonders of his escape, his adventures, and his penance, among a people prone to believe and to rebel ; and, in the first transport, Flanders acknowledged her long-lost sovereign. A short examination before the French court detected the impostor, who was punished with an ignominious death ; but the Flemings still adhered to the pleasing error ; and the countess Jane is accused by the gravest historians of sacrificing to her ambition the life of an unfortunate father.

In all civilized hostility, a treaty is established for the exchange or ransom of prisoners ; and if their captivity be prolonged, their condition is known, and they are treated according to their rank with humanity or honour. But the savage Bulgarian was a stranger to the laws of war ; his prisons were involved in darkness and silence ; and above a year elapsed before the Latins could be assured of the death of Baldwin, before his brother, the regent Henry (A.D. 1206, Aug. 20—A.D. 1216, June 11), would consent to assume the title of emperor. His moderation was applauded by the Greeks as an act of rare and inimitable virtue. Their light and perfidious ambition was eager to seize or anticipate the moment of a vacancy, while a law of succession, the guardian both of the prince and people, was gradually defined and confirmed in the hereditary monarchies of Europe. In the support of the Eastern empire, Henry was gradually left without an associate, as the heroes of the crusade retired from the world or from the war. The doge of Venice, the venerable Dandolo, in the fulness of years and glory, sunk into the grave. The marquis of Monferrat was slowly recalled from the Peloponnesian war to the revenge of Baldwin and the defence of Thessalonica. Some nice disputes of feudal homage and service, were reconciled in a personal interview between the emperor and the king : they were firmly united by mutual esteem and

the common danger : and their alliance was sealed by the nuptials of Henry with the daughter of the Italian prince. He soon deplored the loss of his friend and father. At the persuasion of some faithful Greeks, Boniface made a bold and successful inroad among the hills of Rhodope : the Bulgarians fled on his approach ; they assembled to harass his retreat. On the intelligence that his rear was attacked, without waiting for any defensive armour, he leaped on horseback, couched his lance, and drove the enemies before him ; but in the rash pursuit he was pierced with a mortal wound ; and the head of the king of Thessalonica was presented to Calo-John, who enjoyed the honours, without the merit of victory. It is here, at this melancholy event, that the pen or the voice of Jeffrey of Villehardouin seems to drop or to expire ; and if he still exercised his military office of marshal of Romania, his subsequent exploits are buried in oblivion. The character of Henry was not unequal to his arduous situation : in the siege of Constantinople, and beyond the Hellespont, he had deserved the fame of a valiant knight and a skilful commander ; and his courage was tempered with a degree of prudence and mildness unknown to his impetuous brother. In the double war against the Greeks of Asia and the Bulgarians of Europe, he was ever the foremost on shipboard or on horseback ; and though he cautiously provided for the success of his arms, the drooping Latins were often roused by his example to save and to second their fearless emperor. But such efforts, and some supplies of men and money from France, were of less avail than the errors, the cruelty, and death of their most formidable adversary. When the despair of the Greek subjects invited Calo-John as their deliverer, they hoped that he would protect their liberty and adopt their laws : they were soon taught to compare the degrees of national ferocity, and to execrate the savage conqueror, who no longer dissembled his intention of dispeopling Thrace, of demolishing the cities, and of transplanting the inhabitants beyond the Danube. Many towns and villages of Thrace were already evacuated : an heap of ruins marked the place of Philippopolis, and a similar calamity was expected at Demotica and Hadrianople, by the first authors of the revolt. They raised a cry of grief and repentance to the throne of Henry ; the emperor alone had the magnanimity to forgive and trust them. No more than 400 knights, with their serjeants and archers, could be assembled under his banner ; and with this slender force he fought and repulsed the Bulgarian, who, besides his infantry, was at the head of 40,000 horse. In this expedition, Henry felt the difference between an hostile and a friendly country ; the remaining cities were preserved by his arms ; and the savage, with shame and loss, was compelled to relinquish his prey. The siege of Thessalonica was the last of the evils which Calo-John inflicted or suffered : he was stabbed in the night in his tent ; and the general, perhaps the assassin, who

found him weltering in his blood, ascribed the blow with general applause to the lance of St. Demetrius. After several victories, the prudence of Henry concluded an honourable peace with the successor of the tyrant, and with the Greek princes of Nice and Epirus. If he ceded some doubtful limits, an ample kingdom was reserved for himself and his feudatories ; and his reign, which lasted only ten years, afforded a short interval of prosperity and peace. Far above the narrow policy of Baldwin and Boniface, he freely entrusted to the Greeks the most important offices of the state and army : and this liberality of sentiment and practice was the more seasonable, as the princes of Nice and Epirus had already learned to seduce and employ the mercenary valour of the Latins. It was the aim of Henry to unite and reward his deserving subjects of every nation and language ; but he appeared less solicitous to accomplish the impracticable union of the two churches. Pelagius, the pope's legate, who acted as the sovereign of Constantinople, had interdicted the worship of the Greeks, and sternly imposed the payment of tithes, the double procession of the Holy Ghost, and a blind obedience to the Roman pontiff. As the weaker party, they pleaded the duties of conscience, and implored the rights of toleration : " Our bodies," they said, " are Cæsar's, but our souls belong only to God." The persecution was checked by the firmness of the emperor ; and if we can believe that the same prince was poisoned by the Greeks themselves, we must entertain a contemptible idea of the sense and gratitude of mankind. His valour was a vulgar attribute, which he shared with ten thousand knights ; but Henry possessed the superior courage to oppose, in a superstitious age, the pride and avarice of the clergy. In the cathedral of St. Sophia he presumed to place his throne on the right hand of the patriarch ; and this presumption excited the sharpest censure of pope Innocent the third. By a salutary edict, one of the first examples of the laws of mortmain, he prohibited the alienation of fiefs ; many of the Latins, desirous of returning to Europe, resigned their estates to the church for a spiritual or temporal reward ; these holy lands were immediately discharged from military service ; and a colony of soldiers would have been gradually transformed into a college of priests.

The virtuous Henry died at Thessalonica, in the defence of that kingdom, and of an infant, the son of his friend Boniface. In the two first emperors of Constantinople the male line of the counts of Flanders was extinct. But their sister Yolande was the wife of a French prince, the mother of a numerous progeny ; and one of her daughters had married Andrew king of Hungary, a brave and pious champion of the cross. By seating him on the Byzantine throne, the barons of Romania would have acquired the forces of a neighbouring and warlike kingdom ; but the prudent Andrew revered the laws of succession ; and the princess Yolande, with her husband Peter of Courtenay, count

of Auxerre, was invited by the Latins to assume (A.D. 1217. April 9) the empire of the East. The royal birth of his father, the noble origin of his mother, recommended to the barons of France the first cousin of their king. His reputation was fair, his possessions were ample, and, in the bloody crusade against the Albigeois, the soldiers and the priests had been abundantly satisfied of his zeal and valour. Vanity might applaud the elevation of a French emperor of Constantinople; but prudence must pity, rather than envy, his treacherous and imaginary greatness. To assert and adorn his title, he was reduced to sell or mortgage the best of his patrimony. By these expedients, the liberality of his royal kinsman Philip Augustus, and the national spirit of chivalry, he was enabled to pass the Alps at the head of 140 knights, and 5500 serjeants and archers. After some hesitation, pope Honorius the third was persuaded to crown the successor of Constantine; but he performed the ceremony in a church without the walls, lest he should seem to imply or to bestow any right of sovereignty over the ancient capital of the empire. The Venetians had engaged to transport Peter and his forces beyond the Hadriatic, and the empress, with her four children, to the Byzantine palace; but they required, as the price of their service, that he should recover Durazzo from the despot of Epirus. Michael Angelus, or Comnenus, the first of his dynasty, had bequeathed the succession of his power and ambition to Theodore, his legitimate brother, who already threatened and invaded the establishments of the Latins. After discharging his debt by a fruitless assault, the emperor raised the siege to prosecute a long and perilous journey overland from Durazzo to Thessalonica. He was soon lost in the mountains of Epirus: the passes were fortified; his provisions exhausted: he was delayed and deceived by a treacherous negotiation; and, after Peter of Courtenay and the Roman legate had been arrested in a banquet, the French troops, without leaders or hopes, were eager to exchange their arms for the delusive promise of mercy and bread. The Vatican thundered; and the impious Theodore was threatened with the vengeance of earth and heaven; but the captive emperor and his soldiers were forgotten, and the reproaches of the pope are confined to the imprisonment of his legate. No sooner was he satisfied by the deliverance of the priest and a promise of spiritual obedience, than he pardoned and protected the despot of Epirus. His peremptory commands suspended the ardour of the Venetians and the king of Hungary; and it was only by a natural or untimely death that Peter of Courtenay was released from his hopeless (A.D. 1217—1219) captivity.

The long ignorance of his fate, and the presence of the lawful sovereign, of Yolande, his wife or widow, delayed the proclamation of a new emperor. Before her death, and in the midst of her grief, she was delivered of a son, who was named Baldwin, the last and most unfortunate of the Latin princes of Constantinople. His birth endeared

him to the barons of Romania ; but his childhood would have prolonged the troubles of a minority, and his claims were superseded by the elder claims of his brethren. The first of these, Philip of Courtenay, who derived from his mother the inheritance of Namur, had the wisdom to prefer the substance of a marquisate to the shadow of an empire ; and on his refusal, Robert, the second of the sons of Peter and Yolande, was called to the throne (A.D. 1221—1228) of Constantinople. Warned by his father's mischance, he pursued his slow and secure journey through Germany and along the Danube : a passage was opened by his sister's marriage with the king of Hungary ; and the emperor Robert was crowned by the patriarch in the cathedral of St. Sophia. But his reign was an æra of calamity and disgrace ; and the colony, as it was styled, of NEW FRANCE yielded on all sides to the Greeks of Nice and Epirus. After a victory which he owed to his perfidy rather than his courage, Theodore Angelus entered the kingdom of Thessalonica, expelled the feeble Demetrius, the son of the marquis Boniface, erected his standard on the walls of Hadrianople ; and added, by his vanity, a third or fourth name to the list of rival emperors. The relics of the Asiatic province were swept away by John Vataces, the son-in-law and successor of Theodore Lascaris, and who, in a triumphant reign of thirty-three years, displayed the virtues both of peace and war. Under his discipline the swords of the French mercenaries were the most effectual instrument of his conquests, and their desertion from the service of their country was at once a symptom and a cause of the rising ascendant of the Greeks. By the construction of a fleet, he obtained the command of the Hellespont, reduced the islands of Lesbos and Rhodes, attacked the Venetians of Candia, and intercepted the rare and parsimonious succours of the West. Once, and once only, the Latin emperor sent an army against Vataces ; and in the defeat of that army, the veteran knights, the last of the original conquerors, were left on the field of battle. But the success of a foreign enemy was less painful to the pusillanimous Robert than the insolence of his Latin subjects, who confounded the weakness of the emperor and of the empire. His personal misfortunes will prove the anarchy of the government and the ferociousness of the times. The amorous youth had neglected his Greek bride, the daughter of Vataces, to introduce into the palace a beautiful maid, of a private, though noble, family of Artois ; and her mother had been tempted by the lustre of the purple to forfeit her engagements with a gentleman of Burgundy. His love was converted into rage ; he assembled his friends, forced the palace gates, threw the mother into the sea, and inhumanly cut off the nose and lips of the wife or concubine of the emperor. Instead of punishing the offender, the barons avowed and applauded the savage deed, which, as a prince and as a man, it was impossible that Robert should forgive. He escaped from the guilty city to im-

plore the justice or compassion of the pope : the emperor was coolly exhorted to return to his station ; before he could obey, he sank under the weight of grief, shame, and impotent resentment.

It was only in the age of chivalry, that valour could ascend from a private station to the thrones of Jerusalem and Constantinople. The titular kingdom of Jerusalem had devolved to Mary, the daughter of Isabel and Conrad of Montferrat, and the grand-daughter of Almeric or Amaury. She was given to John of Brienne (A.D. 1228—1237), of a noble family in Champagne, by the public voice and the judgment of Philip Augustus, who named him as the most worthy champion of the Holy Land. In the fifth crusade, he led 100,000 Latins to the conquest of Egypt ; by him the siege of Damietta was achieved ; and the subsequent failure was justly ascribed to the pride and avarice of the legate. After the marriage of his daughter with Frederic the second, he was provoked by the emperor's ingratitude to accept the command of the army of the church ; and though advanced in life, and despoiled of royalty, the sword and spirit of John of Brienne were still ready for the service of Christendom. In the seven years of his brother's reign, Baldwin of Courtenay had not emerged from a state of childhood, and the barons of Romania felt the strong necessity of placing the sceptre in the hands of a man and an hero. The veteran king of Jerusalem might have disdained the name and office of regent ; they agreed to invest him for his life with the title and prerogatives of emperor, on the sole condition that Baldwin should marry his second daughter, and succeed at a mature age to the throne of Constantinople. The expectation both of the Greeks and Latins, was kindled by the renown, the choice, and the presence of John of Brienne : and they admired his martial aspect, his green and vigorous age of more than fourscore years, and his size and stature, which surpassed the common measure of mankind. But avarice, and the love of ease, appeared to have chilled the ardour of enterprise : his troops were disbanded, and two years rolled away without action or honour, till he was awakened by the dangerous alliance of Vataces emperor of Nice, and of Azan king of Bulgaria. They besieged Constantinople by sea and land, with an army of 100,000 men, and a fleet of 300 ships of war ; while the entire force of the Latin emperor was reduced to 160 knights, and a small addition of serjeants and archers. I tremble to relate, that instead of defending the city, the hero made a sally at the head of his cavalry ; and that of forty-eight squadrons of the enemy, no more than three escaped from the edge of his invincible sword. Fired by his example, the infantry and the citizens boarded the vessels that anchored close to the walls : and twenty-five were dragged in triumph into the harbour of Constantinople. At the summons of the emperor, the vassals and allies armed in her defence ; broke through every obstacle that opposed their passage ; and, in the succeeding year obtained a second victory over

the same enemies. By the rude poets of the age, John of Brienne is compared to Hector, Roland, and Judas Machabæus ; but their credit, and his glory, receives some abatement from the silence of the Greeks. The empire was soon deprived of the last of her champions ; and the dying monarch was ambitious to enter paradise in the habit of a Franciscan friar.

In the double victory of John of Brienne, I cannot discover the name or exploits of his pupil Baldwin ; who had attained the age of military service, and who succeeded (A.D. 1237. Mar. 23—A.D. 1261. July 25) to the Imperial dignity on the decease of his adoptive father. The royal youth was employed on a commission more suitable to his temper ; he was sent to visit the Western courts, of the pope more especially, and of the king of France ; to excite their pity by the view of his innocence and distress ; and to obtain some supplies of men or money for the relief of the sinking empire. He thrice repeated these mendicant visits, in which he seemed to prolong his stay and postpone his return : of the five-and-twenty years of his reign, a greater number were spent abroad than at home ; and in no place did the emperor deem himself less free and secure, than in his native country and his capital. On some public occasions, his vanity might be soothed by the title of Augustus, and by the honours of the purple ; and at the general council of Lyons, when Frederic the second was excommunicated and deposed, his Oriental colleague was enthroned on the right-hand of the pope. But how often was the exile, the vagrant, the Imperial beggar, humbled with scorn, insulted with pity, and degraded in his own eyes and those of the nations ! In his first visit to England, he was stopped at Dover, by a severe reprimand, that he should presume, without leave, to enter an independent kingdom. After some delay, Baldwin however was permitted to pursue his journey, was entertained with cold civility, and thankfully departed with a present of seven hundred marks. From the avarice of Rome he could only obtain the proclamation of a crusade and a treasure of indulgences ; a coin, whose currency was depreciated by too frequent and indiscriminate abuse. His birth and misfortunes recommended him to the generosity of his cousin Lewis the ninth ; but the martial zeal of the saint was diverted from Constantinople to Egypt and Palestine ; and the public and private property of Baldwin was alleviated, for a moment, by the alienation of the marquise of Namur and the lordship of Courtenay, the last remains of his inheritance. By such shameful or ruinous expedients, he once more returned to Romania, with an army of 30,000 soldiers, whose numbers were doubled in the apprehension of the Greeks. His first despatches to France and England announced his victories and his hopes : he had reduced the country round the capital to the distance of three days' journey ; and if he succeeded against an important, though nameless city (most probably Chiorli), the frontier would be safe and the passage accessible.

But these expectations (if Baldwin was sincere) quickly vanished like a dream : the troops and treasures of France melted away in his unskilful hands ; and the throne of the Latin emperor was protected by a dishonourable alliance with the Turks and Comans. To secure the former, he consented to bestow his niece on the unbelieving sultan of Cogni ; to please the latter he complied with their pagan rites ; a dog was sacrificed between the two armies ; and the contracting parties tasted each other's blood, as a pledge of their fidelity. In the palace or prison of Constantinople, the successor of Augustus demolished the vacant houses for winter fuel, and stripped the lead from the churches for the daily expence of his family. Some usurious loans were dealt with a scanty hand by the merchants of Italy ; and Philip, his son and heir, was pawned at Venice as the security for a debt. Thirst, hunger, and nakedness are positive evils ; but wealth is relative ; and a prince, who would be rich in a private station, may be exposed by the increase of his wants to all the anxiety and bitterness of poverty.

But in this abject distress, the emperor and empire were still possessed of an ideal treasure, which drew its fantastic value from the superstition of the Christian world. The merit of the true cross was somewhat impaired by its frequent division ; and a long captivity among the infidels might shed some suspicion on the fragments that were produced in the East and West. But another relic of the Passion was preserved in the Imperial chapel of Constantinople ; and the crown of thorns which had been placed on the head of Christ was equally precious and authentic. It had formerly been the practice of the Egyptian debtors to deposit, as a security, the mummies of their parents ; and both their honour and religion were bound for the redemption of the pledge. In the same manner, and in the absence of the emperor, the barons of Romania borrowed the sum of 13,134 pieces of gold, on the credit of the holy crown : they failed in the performance of their contract ; and a rich Venetian, Nicholas Querini, undertook to satisfy their impatient creditors, on condition that the relic should be lodged at Venice, to become his absolute property, if it were not redeemed within a short and definite term. The barons apprised their sovereign of the hard treaty and impending loss ; and as the empire could not afford a ransom of £7000, Baldwin was anxious to snatch the prize from the Venetians, and to vest it with more honour and emolument in the hands of the most Christian king. Yet the negotiation was attended with some delicacy. In the purchase of relics, the saint would have started at the guilt of simony ; but if the mode of expression were changed, he might lawfully repay the debt, accept the gift, and acknowledge the obligation. His ambassadors two Dominicans, were dispatched to Venice, to redeem and receive the holy crown, which had escaped the dangers of the sea and the galleys of Vataces. On opening a wooden box, they recognized the seals of

the doge and barons, which were applied on a shrine of silver : and within this shrine, the monument of the Passion was inclosed in a golden vase. The reluctant Venetians yielded to justice and power : the emperor Frederic granted a free and honourable passage ; the court of France advanced as far as Troyes in Champagne, to meet with devotion this inestimable relic : it was borne in triumph through Paris by the king himself, barefoot, and in his shirt ; and a free gift of 10,000 marks of silver reconciled Baldwin to his loss. The success of this transaction tempted the Latin emperor to offer with the same generosity the remaining furniture of his chapel ; a large and authentic portion of the true cross ; the baby-linen of the Son of God ; the lance, the sponge, and the chain of his Passion ; the rod of Moses, and part of the skull of St. John the Baptist. For the reception of these spiritual treasures, 20,000 marks were expended by St. Louis on a stately foundation, the holy chapel of Paris, on which the muse of Boileau has bestowed a comic immortality. The truth of such remote and ancient relics, which cannot be proved by any human testimony, must be admitted, by those who believe in the miracles which they have performed. About the middle of the last age, an inveterate ulcer was touched and cured by an holy prickle of the holy crown : the prodigy is attested by the most pious and enlightened Christians of France ; nor will the fact be easily disproved, except by those who are armed with a general antidote against religious credulity.

The Latins of Constantinople were on all sides encompassed (A.D. 1237—1261) and pressed : their sole hope, the last delay of their ruin, was in the division of their Greek and Bulgarian enemies ; and of this hope they were deprived by the superior arms and policy of Vataces emperor of Nice. From the Propontis to the rocky coast of Pamphylia, Asia was peaceful and prosperous under his reign : and the events of every campaign extended his influence in Europe. The strong cities of the hills of Macedonia and Thrace, were rescued from the Bulgarians ; and their kingdom was circumscribed by its present and proper limits, along the southern banks of the Danube. The sole emperor of the Romans could no longer brook that a lord of Epirus, a Comnenian prince of the West, should presume to dispute or share the honours of the purple ; and the humble Demetrius changed the colour of his buskins and accepted with gratitude the appellation of despot. His own subjects were exasperated by his baseness and incapacity : they implored the protection of their supreme lord. After some resistance, the kingdom of Thessalonica was united to the empire of Nice ; and Vataces reigned without a competitor from the Turkish borders to the Hadriatic gulf. The princes of Europe revered his merit and power ; and had he subscribed an orthodox creed, it should seem that the pope would have abandoned without reluctance the Latin throne of Constantinople. But the death of Vataces, the short and busy reign

of Theodore his son, and the helpless infancy of his grandson John, suspended the restoration of the Greeks. The young prince was oppressed by the ambition of his guardian and colleague (A.D. 1259. Dec. 1) Michael Palæologus, who displayed the virtues and vices that belong to the founder of a new dynasty. The emperor Baldwin had flattered himself, that he might recover some provinces or cities by an impotent negotiation. His ambassadors were dismissed from Nice with mockery and contempt. At every place which they named, Palæologus alleged some special reason, which rendered it dear and valuable in his eyes : in the one he was born ; in another he had been first promoted to military command ; and in a third he had enjoyed, and hoped long to enjoy, the pleasures of the chace. "And what then do you propose to give us?" said the astonished deputies. "Nothing," replied the Greek, "not a foot of land. If your master be desirous of peace, let him pay me as an annual tribute, the sum which he receives from the trade and customs of Constantinople. On these terms, I may allow him to reign. If he refuses, it is war. I am not ignorant of the art of war, and I trust the event to God and my sword." An expedition against the despot of Epirus was the first prelude of his arms. If a victory was followed by a defeat ; if the race of Comneni or Angeli survived in those mountains his efforts and his reign ; the captivity of Villehardouin, prince of Achaia, deprived the Latins of the most active and powerful vassal of their expiring monarchy. The republics of Venice and Genoa disputed, in the first of their naval wars, the command of the sea and the commerce of the East. Pride and interest attached the Venetians to the defence of Constantinople : their rivals were tempted to promote the designs of her enemies, and the alliance of the Genoese with the schismatic conqueror provoked the indignation of the Latin Church.

Intent on this great object, the emperor Michael visited in person and strengthened the troops and fortifications of Thrace. The remains of the Latins were driven from their last possessions : he assaulted without success the suburb of Galata ; and corresponded with a perfidious baron, who proved unwilling, or unable, to open the gates of the metropolis. The next spring, his favourite general, Alexius Strategopulus, whom he had decorated with the title of Cæsar, passed the Hellespont with eight hundred horse and some infantry, on a secret expedition. His instructions enjoined him to approach, to listen, to watch, but not to risk any doubtful or dangerous enterprise against the city. The adjacent territory between the Propontis and the Black Sea, was cultivated by an hardy race of peasants and outlaws, exercised in arms, uncertain in their allegiance, but inclined by language, religion, and present advantage, to the party of the Greeks. They were styled the *volunteers*, and by their free service, the army of Alexius, with the regulars of Thrace and the Coman auxiliaries, was augmented

to the number of 25,000 men. By the ardour of the volunteers, and by his own ambition, the Cæsar was stimulated to disobey the precise orders of his master, in the just confidence that success would plead his pardon and reward. The weakness of Constantinople, and the distress and terror of the Latins, were familiar to the observation of the volunteers : and they represented the present moment as the most propitious to surprise and conquest. A rash youth, the new governor of the Venetian colony, had sailed away with thirty galleys and the best of the French knights, on a wild expedition to Daphnusia, a town on the Black Sea, at the distance of forty leagues ; and the remaining Latins were without strength or suspicion. They were informed that Alexius had passed the Hellespont ; but their apprehensions were lulled by the smallness of his original numbers ; and their imprudence had not watched the subsequent increase of his army. If he left his main body to second and support his operations, he might advance unperceived in the night with a chosen detachment. While some applied (A.D. 1261. July 25) scaling ladders to the lowest part of the walls, they were secure of an old Greek, who could introduce their companions through a subterraneous passage into his house ; they could soon on the inside break an entrance through the golden gate, which had been long obstructed ; and the conqueror would be in the heart of the city, before the Latins were conscious of their danger. After some debate, the Cæsar resigned himself to the faith of the volunteers ; they were trusty, bold, and successful ; and in describing the plan, I have already related the execution and success. But no sooner had Alexius passed the threshold of the golden gate, than he trembled at his own rashness ; he paused, he deliberated ; till the desperate volunteers urged him forwards, by the assurance that in retreat lay the greatest and most inevitable danger. Whilst the Cæsar kept his regulars in firm array, the Comans dispersed themselves on all sides ; an alarm was sounded, and the threats of fire and pillage compelled the citizens to a decisive resolution. The Greeks of Constantinople remembered their native sovereigns ; the Genoese merchants, their recent alliance and Venetian foes ; every quarter was in arms ; and the air resounded with a general acclamation of " Long life and victory to Michael and John, the august emperors of the Romans !" Their rival, Baldwin, was awakened by the sound ; but the most pressing danger could not prompt him to draw his sword in the defence of a city which he deserted, perhaps, with more pleasure than regret ; he fled from the palace to the sea-shore, where he descried the welcome sails of the fleet returning from the vain and fruitless attempt on Daphnusia. Constantinople was irrecoverably lost ; but the Latin Emperor and the principal families embarked on board the Venetian galleys, and steered for the isle of Eubœa, and afterwards for Italy, where the royal fugitive was entertained by the pope and Sicilian king with a mixture

of contempt and pity. From the loss of Constantinople to his death, he consumed thirteen years, soliciting the Catholic powers to join in his restoration; the lesson had been familiar to his youth; nor was his last exile more indigent or shameful than his three former pilgrimages to the courts of Europe. His son Philip was the heir of an ideal empire; and the pretensions of *his* daughter Catherine were transported by her marriage to Charles of Valois, the brother of Philip the Fair king of France. The house of Courtenay was represented in the female line by successive alliances, till the title of emperor of Constantinople, too bulky and sonorous for a private name, modestly expired in silence and oblivion.

After this narrative of the expeditions of the Latins to Palestine and Constantinople, I cannot dismiss the subject without revolving the general consequences on the countries that were the scene, and on the nations that were the actors of these memorable crusades. As soon as the arms of the Franks were withdrawn, the impression, though not the memory, was erased in the Mahometan realms of Egypt and Syria. The faithful disciples of the prophet were never tempted by a profane desire to study the laws or language of the idolaters; nor did the simplicity of their primitive manners receive the slightest alteration from their intercourse in peace and war with the unknown strangers of the West. The Greeks, who thought themselves proud, but who were only vain, showed a disposition somewhat less inflexible. In the efforts for the recovery of their empire, they emulated the valour, discipline, and tactics, of their antagonists. The modern literature of the West they might justly despise; but its free spirit would instruct them in the rights of man; and some institutions of public and private life were adopted from the French. The correspondence of Constantinople and Italy diffused the knowledge of the Latin tongue; and several of the fathers and classics were at length honoured with a Greek version. But the national and religious prejudices of the Orientals were inflamed by persecution; and the reign of the Latins confirmed the separation of the two churches.

If we compare, at the æra of the crusades, the Latins of Europe with the Greeks and Arabians, their respective degrees of knowledge, industry, and art, our rude ancestors must be content with the third rank in the scale of nations. Their successive improvement and present superiority may be ascribed to a peculiar energy of character, to an active and imitative spirit, unknown to their more polished rivals, who at that time were in a stationary or retrograde state. With such a disposition, the Latins should have derived the most early and essential benefits from a series of events which opened to their eyes the prospect of the world, and introduced them to a long and frequent intercourse with the more cultivated regions of the East. The first and most obvious progress was in trade and manufactures, in the

arts which are strongly prompted by the thirst of wealth, the calls of necessity, and the gratification of the sense or vanity. Among the crowd of unthinking fanatics, a captive or a pilgrim might sometimes observe the superior refinements of Cairo and Constantinople : the first importer of wind-mills* was the benefactor of nations ; and if such blessings are enjoyed without any grateful remembrance, history has condescended to notice the more apparent luxuries of silk and sugar, which were transported into Italy from Greece and Egypt. But the intellectual wants of the Latins were more slowly felt and supplied ; the ardour of studious curiosity was awakened in Europe by different causes and more recent events ; and, in the age of the crusades, they viewed with careless indifference the literature of the Greeks and Arabians. Some rudiments of mathematical and medicinal knowledge might be imparted in practice and in figures ; necessity might produce some interpreters for the grosser business of merchants and soldiers ; but the commerce of the Orientals had not diffused the study and knowledge of their languages in the schools of Europe. If a similar principle of religion repulsed the idiom of the Koran, it should have excited their patience and curiosity to understand the original text of the Gospel ; and the same grammar would have unfolded the sense of Plato and the beauties of Homer. Yet in a reign of sixty years the Latins of Constantinople disdained the speech and learning of their subjects ; and the manuscripts were the only treasures which the natives might enjoy without rapine or envy. Aristotle was indeed the oracle of the Western universities ; but it was a barbarous Aristotle ; and, instead of ascending to the fountain-head, his Latin votaries humbly accepted a corrupt and remote version from the Jews and Moors of Andalusia. The principle of the crusades was a savage fanaticism ; and the most important effects were analogous to the cause. Each pilgrim was ambitious to return with his sacred spoils, the relics of Greece and Palestine ; and each relic was preceded and followed by a train of miracles and visions. The belief of the Catholics was corrupted by new legends, their practice by new superstitions ; and the establishment of the inquisition, the mendicant orders of monks and friars, the last abuse of indulgences, and the final progress of idolatry, flowed from the baleful fountain of the holy war. The active spirit of the Latins preyed on the vitals of their reason and religion ; and if the ninth and tenth centuries were the times of darkness, the thirteenth and fourteenth were the age of absurdity and fable.

In the profession of Christianity, in the cultivation of a fertile land, the northern conquerors of the Roman empire insensibly mingled with the provincials, and rekindled the embers of the arts of antiquity. Their settlements about the age of Charlemagne had acquired some

* Windmills, first invented in the dry country of Asia Minor, and used in Normandy in 1105.

degree of order and stability, when they were overwhelmed by new swarms of invaders, the Normans, Saracens, and Hungarians, who replunged the western countries of Europe into their former state of anarchy and barbarism. About the eleventh century, the second tempest had subsided by the expulsion or conversion of the enemies of Christendom : the tide of civilization, which had so long ebbed, began to flow with a steady and accelerated course ; and a fairer prospect was opened to the hopes and efforts of the rising generations.

Great was the increase, and rapid the progress, during the two hundred years of the crusades ; and some philosophers have applauded the propitious influence of these holy wars, which appear to me to have checked rather than forwarded the maturity of Europe. The lives and labours of millions, which were buried in the East, would have been more profitably employed in the improvement of their native country : the accumulated stock of industry and wealth would have overflowed in navigation and trade ; and the Latins would have been enriched and enlightened by a pure and friendly correspondence with the climates of the East. In one respect I can indeed perceive the accidental operation of the crusades, not so much in producing a benefit as in removing an evil. The larger portion of the inhabitants of Europe was chained to the soil, without freedom, or property, or knowledge ; and the two orders of ecclesiastics and nobles, whose numbers were comparatively small, alone deserved the name of citizens and men. This oppressive system was supported by the arts of the clergy and the swords of the barons. The authority of the priests operated in the darker ages as a salutary antidote : they prevented the total extinction of letters, mitigated the fierceness of the times, sheltered the poor and defenceless, and preserved or revived the peace and order of civil society. But the independence, rapine, and discord of the feudal lords were unmixed with any semblance of good ; and every hope of industry and improvement was crushed by the iron weight of the martial aristocracy. Among the causes that undermined that Gothic edifice, a conspicuous place must be allowed to the crusades. The estates of the barons were dissipated, and their race was often extinguished, in these costly and perilous expeditions. Their poverty extorted from their pride those charters of freedom which unlocked the fetters of the slave, secured the farm of the peasant and the shop of the artificer, and gradually restored a substance and a soul to the most numerous and useful part of the community. The conflagration which destroyed the tall and barren trees of the forest, gave air and scope to the vegetation of the smaller and nutritive plants of the soil.

HALLAM ON CHIVALRY.

But the best school of moral discipline which the middle ages afforded was the institution of chivalry. There are, if I may say so, three powerful spirits which have from time to time moved over the face of the waters, and given a predominant impulse to the moral sentiments and energies of mankind. These are the spirits of liberty, of religion, and of honour. It was the principal business of chivalry to animate and cherish the last of these three. And whatever high magnanimous energy the love of liberty or religious zeal has ever imparted, was equalled by the exquisite sense of honour which this institution preserved.

It appears probable, that the custom of receiving arms at the age of manhood with some solemnity was of immemorial antiquity among the nations that overthrew the Roman empire. This ceremony, however, would perhaps of itself have done little towards forming that intrinsic principle which characterised the genuine chivalry. Certain feudal tenants, and I suppose also allodial proprietors, were bound to serve on horseback, equipped with the coat of mail. These were called *Caballarii*, from which the word *chevaliers* is an obvious corruption. But he who fought on horseback, and had been invested with peculiar arms in a solemn manner, wanted nothing more to render him a knight. We may, however, go farther, and observe that these distinctive advantages above ordinary combatants were probably the sources of that remarkable valour and that keen thirst for glory, which became the essential attributes of a knightly character. The soul of chivalry was individual honour, coveted in so entire and absolute a perfection that it must not be shared with an army or a nation. Most of the virtues it inspired were what we may call independent, as opposed to those which are founded upon social relations. The knights-errant of romance perform their best exploits from the love of renown, or from a sort of abstract sense of justice, rather than from any solicitude to promote the happiness of mankind.

In the first state of chivalry, it was closely connected with the military service of fiefs. The *Caballarii* in the Capitularies, the *Milites* of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, were landholders who followed their lord or sovereign into the field. A certain value of land was termed in England a knight's fee, or, in Normandy, *feudum loricae*, *fief de haubert*, from the coat of mail which it entitled and required the tenant to wear; a military tenure was said to be by service in chivalry. A younger brother, leaving the paternal estate, in which he took a slender share, might look to wealth and dignity in the service of a powerful count. Knighthood, which he could not claim as his legal right, became the object of his chief ambition. It raised him in the scale of society, equalling him in dress, in arms, and in title, to the rich landholders. As it was due to his merit, it did much more than equal him to those who had no pretensions but from wealth; and the territorial knights became by degrees ashamed of assuming the title till they could challenge it by real desert.

This class of noble and gallant cavaliers, serving commonly for pay, but on the most honourable footing, became far more numerous through the crusades; a great epoch in the history of European society. During the period of the crusades, we find the institution of chivalry acquire

its full vigour as an order of personal nobility ; and its original connexion with feudal tenure, if not effaced, became in a great measure forgotten in the splendour and dignity of the new form which it wore.

The crusades, however, changed in more than one respect the character of chivalry. Before that epoch it appears to have had no particular reference to religion. We can hardly perceive indeed why the assumption of arms to be used in butchering mankind should be treated as a religious ceremony. But the purposes for which men bore arms in a crusade so sanctified their use, that chivalry acquired the character as much of a religious as a military institution. For many centuries, the recovery of the Holy Land was constantly at the heart of a brave and superstitious nobility ; and every knight was supposed at his creation to pledge himself, as occasion should arise, to that cause. Meanwhile, the defence of God's law against infidels was his primary and standing duty. A knight, whenever present at mass, held the point of his sword before him while the Gospel was read, to signify his readiness to support it. The candidate passed nights in prayer among priests in a church ; he received the sacraments ; he entered into a bath, and was clad with a white robe, in allusion to the presumed purification of his life ; his sword was solemnly blessed ; everything, in short, was contrived to identify his new condition with the defence of religion, or at least with that of the church.

Courtesy had always been the proper attribute of knighthood ; protection of the weak its legitimate duty ; but these were heightened to a pitch of enthusiasm when woman became their object. There was little jealousy shown in the treatment of that sex, at least in France, the fountain of chivalry ; they were present at festivals, at tournaments, and sat promiscuously in the halls of their castles.

Next therefore, or even equal to devotion, stood gallantry among the principles of knighthood. But all comparison between the two was saved by blending them together. The love of God and the ladies was enjoined as a single duty. But neither that emulous valour which chivalry excited, nor the religion and gallantry which were its animating principles, alloyed as the latter were by the corruption of those ages, could have rendered its institution materially conducive to the moral improvement of society. There were, however, excellences of a very high class which it equally encouraged. In the books professedly written to lay down the duties of knighthood they appear to spread over the whole compass of human obligations. A juster estimate of chivalrous manners is to be deduced from romances. From history itself, we may infer the tendency of chivalry to elevate and purify the moral feelings. Three virtues may particularly be noticed as essential, in the estimation of mankind, to the character of a knight,—loyalty, courtesy, and munificence.

The first of these, in its original sense, may be defined fidelity to engagements ; whether actual promises, or such tacit obligations as bound a vassal to his lord, and a subject to his prince. Breach of faith, and especially of an express promise, was held a disgrace that no valour could redeem. This is one of the most striking changes produced by chivalry. Treachery, the usual vice of savage as well as corrupt nations, became infamous during the vigour of that discipline. As

personal rather than national feelings actuated its heroes, they never felt that hatred, much less that fear, of their enemies which blind men to the heinousness of ill faith. Though avarice may have been the primary motive of ransoming prisoners, instead of putting them to death, their permission to return home on the word of honour, in order to procure the stipulated sum—an indulgence never refused—could only be founded on experienced confidence in the principles of chivalry.

A knight was unfit to remain a member of the order if he violated his faith; he was ill-acquainted with its duties if he proved wanting in courtesy. Besides the grace which this beautiful virtue threw over the habits of social life, it softened down the natural roughness of war, and gradually introduced that indulgent treatment of prisoners which was almost unknown to antiquity. Liberality, and disdain of money, might also be reckoned among the essential virtues of chivalry.

Valour, loyalty, courtesy, munificence, formed collectively the character of an accomplished knight, so far as was displayed in the ordinary tenor of his life, reflecting these virtues as an unsullied mirror. Yet something more was required for the perfect idea of chivalry, and enjoined by its principles; an active sense of justice, an ardent indignation against wrong, a determination of courage to its best end, the prevention or redress of injury.

The characteristic virtues of chivalry bear so much resemblance to those which Eastern writers of the same period extol, that I am a little disposed to suspect Europe of having derived some improvement from imitation of Asia. Though the crusades began in abhorrence of infidels, this sentiment wore off in some degree before their cessation; and the regular intercourse of commerce, sometimes of alliance, between the Christians of Palestine and the Saracens, must have removed part of the prejudice, while experience of their enemy's courage and generosity in war would with these gallant knights serve to lighten the remainder. Excepting that romantic gallantry towards women, which their customs would not admit, the Mahomedan chieftains were abundantly qualified to fulfil the duties of European chivalry.

The licence of times so imperfectly civilized could not be expected to yield to institutions which, like those of religion, fell prodigiously short in their practical result of the reformation which they were designed to work. An undue thirst for military renown was a fault that chivalry must have nourished; and the love of war, sufficiently pernicious in any shape, was more founded on personal feelings of honour, and less on public spirit, than in the citizens of free states. The character of knighthood widened the separation between the classes of society, and confirmed that aristocratical spirit of high birth, by which the large mass of mankind were kept in unjust degradation.

THE
DYLECTABLE NEWESSE AND TITHYNGES
OF THE
GLORYOUS VICTORYE
OF THE
RHODYANS AGAYNST THE TURKES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF
G. CAOURSIN

BY
JOHAN KAYE
(POETE LAWREATE).

REPRINT OF EDITION, 1490. W. CAXTON, WESTMINSTER.



THE DELECTABLE NEWESSE
OF THE
GLORIOUS VICTORYE
OF THE
RHODYANS AGAYNEST THE TURKES.

To the most excellent, most redoubted, and most crysten kyng ; King Edward the fourth, Johan Kay hys humble poete laureate and most lowley seruant : knelyng unto the ground sayth salute.

It ys not out of your knowleche and herty wyte moste prudent prynce : howe that theis fourty yeres passed : the turkes haue had the crysten partyes, and have preauyled, and had of the crysten men the ouerhande : in so moche that nowe late agaynest al right, and reason these possessours in Italye, in the domynyon and grounde of the most eonstant Kyng Ferrand of Arragon King of Naples : in preiudyc and horryble terrour to the court apostolyque and to al crystendome. For by that the grete Turke late named Mahumete proposed and ordeyned grete myght and strengthe to undoo and subuerte the holy cytee of Rome, and putte Italye to his subiecty/on, and after rightly to ouercome and opresse the resydue of crystendome. But Jhesu cryste our redemptour wold not his crysten people to be put into longer payne, or to more trybulacion : he hath retrayte and withdrawn hys rodde as a kynd father to his dere children contente with grete menasses and lytil punycyon. Certes the synnes of the crysten people as I thynke : and lytil regarde to our saueour. Jhesu mened and caused the ryghtwys god : to warne us to have him better in mynde by the flagel of this grete and mighty ennemye. But after repentence and prayers of our holy father the pope : Cardynalls : Crysten prynces : and all crysten people : and with so grete pardones of the court of seyntes petre and paule : through the grace of the blessed Jhesu : this grete turke in his moste pryde, and his moste hope hath made be sedeyn deth an ende of his lyne : and ys the cruel generacyon of the turkes for euermore, With goddes grace deiecte, and caste out of Italye And all the Turkes among them selfe in grete werres, whiche thyng ys when to all crysten prynces here after to recouer the partyes crysten.

Certayn yt ys moste gracyous prynce : that he selve dayes afore hys deth layde siege to the noble cytee of Rhodes : Whiche ys the key and gate of all crystendome. But ther he was put to hys worse and to shame. And because that I have seen and red in Italye of the oppressyng and captuyue by the sayde Turke of the worshipful cytee sometime of Constantinople : and also not many yeres passed of the unfortunate losse of the stronge cytee of Nygrepount. For the Cardynale greke of Mycene made and wrote in latyne the lamentable captuyte of Constantinople to the pope : and Balthasar perusyon wrote in the langayge Italyon of Negrepount to the lord of Vrelyn : for to moue the crysten people to prayers and prouycion. I haue thought more beter labur and more commendable purpos yf I in the reuence of Jhesu cryste, and in the worship of your gode grace shulde put with dyligence out of latyn in english, and to the understandyng of your people the dylectable newesse and tythynges of the glorious victorie of the Rhodyans agaynest the Turkes. Whereof the redyng that haue joye, and consolacyon and that alwey beter knowe by dayly myracles and goddes werkes : the inestymable power and certentie of our crysten fayth. And in so moche more to your hynesse I make a gefte of my labour : that your gode grace aboundeth with al vertues : also much as in a moste crysten king longeth to be : And also I am of this opynon that al the comyn wele and comyn gode cometh thro God and the kynges to their peoples. Wherfor what so euer frute or pleasur your peple that in thys my studies finde they shal yelde glorye to God and grace and than kynges to your heyenes. The which God almighty kepe euer and prosper with all your noble desires.

SVTH that I haue aplied me to declare and publysse to alle crysten people the seige of the noble and inuyncible cytee of Rhodes : Fyrst I purpose to telle and opene the causes that meued the cruell tyraunt Mahumete grete Turke and infacyable enemye to oure crysten fayth, that he with so grete might and so grete streynghth seved the Rhodyans : holbe be it, that afore this tyme the rhodyans and the Turkes often haue had werrys : Neuertheles thys cruel Turke after the subduyng and oppressyng of the myserable and dolorous cytee of Constantynople hath begonne and ordeyned agayns the cytee of Rhodes greter werrys thenne euer and hys predecessours. For the entente and purpos of the sayde grete Turke was, to persecute and outerly undoo the crysten fayth. Therefore after the space of. vii. yeres whenne that he had conquered many empyres, kyngdommes, and lordshyppes was wrothe to see the lytyll cytee of Rhodes standyng so nygh his kyngdommes and lordshyppes : not subiect, nor contrybutarye to hym : Wherfore four dyuers tymys with shippes and men of werre

assaulted the castelles and places of the isle of Rhodes, where bothe by lande and by water thorough Goddes grace he was venquysshed and ouerthrowe and of his oste many slayne with the Rhodyans, many drowned and many putte to flyght and to shame : Therfore after he sawe the noble vertys of the knightes and people of Rhodes that nether by fyghtyng, nether by power he might attayne the cytee : thought and ymagyned by subtylte and cauteles to haue hys entente thereof. And so often tymes after that he had grete part of Grece to hys obeysaunce temptyd to make peas and amyte wyth the Rhodyans : so that they wold knowlege hym as theyre souuerayn : and yerely yold hym a lytyll trybute, whych condytyon the Rhodyans alleweye withseyd and dipsyed. And when he sawe that in no wyse he wude gette nor attayne trybute of rhodes in that manere : offered them yet peas : upon this condytyon. That the embassetoures of the knyghtes of seynte John of Jerusalem : that ys to saye of Rhodes shulde come to hys courte and presente to hym certayn royal geftes : the whiche he thoughte to rescyeue under the tytle of trybute : and so by wyles intended to make the sayde cytee of Rhodes trybutarye to hym, but he coude not spede hys fals purpos. For the noble and victorious Prynce and renowned lord the lord mayster of Rhodes and hys prudent countyse : refused of their enemy peas nor wold be of amyte with hym that was a persecutor of crystes fayth and crystes relygyon : And so daye and nyght the most nobelest knyghtes of the sayd Relygyon : accordyng to their ordre helped and defended our fayth and the sayd cytee of Rhodes.

For thees causes now sayed the furyous enemye conceyued agayns the cytee of Rhodes inestymable haterede and wrathe : and ymagyned, yf he myght : outerly to destroye the sayde Rhodes. And to this cruel purpose he was also meued conseyll and persuasyons of the traytours of crystes fayth : the whiche had in knowlege all the places and secretes of Rhodes. Amonge the whiche fals traytours and renegates was one especyall of the cytee of Rhodes : called Antony Melagolo : a man unkynd to god and to man. He was noble of byrth and euyll of condycyons and lyuyng, the which by fore tymes thorough euyl guydynge and onthrustenesse had brought hym selfe to pouerte. Thys man thought and ymagyned by hys fals and subtyl witte a mene to tray and putte in destruction his owen contrey. And therefore he dylygently and priuely esyyed in the cytee of Rhodes al the places defensybles and indefensybles, and pourtrayed and prynted them in a papire : and bore the sayd pourtraytoure and papir to the cytee of Constantynople, and anon after he shewed hit to the gretest cappetayn of the Turke, and gaue hym grete comfort, that he shuld put in hys mynde and dispose hym selfe to the destructyon and captyuyte of Rhodes. And so dede an other fals renegade called Dymetryus Sopheano, the whiche after the captyvyte and destructyon of the cytee of Nygrepont renayed

and forsouke the fayth of chryste and went to the Turk. Thys Dymetryus by fore tymes had dwelled in Rhodes, and had ben ambassadeur from the Turke to the Rhodyans : Under a faynte and colour to desire peas. Also after the space of. iii. yeres which were spended and occupied in the conseyling of thes werkes and that it had ben shewed : that they myghte come to their entente. the forsayd capeteyne was wel pleased. To the whiche also many other renegates had gyuen by dyueres menes counseyl and comfort.

But among them al the forsayd Antony : sayd and affirmed that a grete part of the walles of the cytee of Rhodes was olde and in decaye. And that there were but fewe men of dyffence in the cytee. And also they lakked vytalles. And that they coude not have in tyme of nede helpe of crysten kynges. For they were to ferre from them. And al this was graunted and for certayn affirmed by Dymetryus and his felowes renegates. And so with their false comfort, it was thought necessarye to the partye of the Turke, to ordeyne their engynes and instrumentes ; for the siege of Rhodes. In what tyme that thees thynges were thought and counseyled in Constantynople among the turke and his counseyle. The vycctorious prynce and lords : The lorde mayster of Rhodes called Mayster Peter Daubusson : a man of high prudence and of the noble blode and hous of Fraunce, had knowlege of the conspyracye and fals ymagynacyon the which was wrought agaynst the cytee of Rhodes. And so by the grace of almighty God in the space of thre yeres next folowynge made grete reparacyons and renewed the olde walles of the forsayde cytee of Rhodes ; where as nede was. And also made pollitike and grete prouvsyons : that is to saye, of wyne, white and other vytaylles necessaryes. And wrote epysteles and lettres unto alle countrys, landes and prouncs of Crysten relygion for the knyghtes of his ordre, commandyng them to come kepe and defende the noble cytee of Rhodes. And so by the wil of God almighty : Rhodes in al haste was fortifyed, with vytalles, shyppes : and men of werre.

But the traytour Antony thenne beyng in the cytee of Constantinople and not hauyng knowlege of this grete prouueyoyr of Rhodes, comforted and exhorted the grete Basse, that ys to say : the grete capetanye under the Turke. that he shulde in alle haste ordeyne him to the siege of Rhodes. Whereupon the sayd Basse aduertysed the grete Turke of the enformacyons of the sayd Antony and other renegates. Wherefore amonges the knyghtes and men of werre of the turkys party was calleed a grete parlement and conseyle. Where many dyuers oppnyons wer taken. For somme of theym sayde. That hyt was impossible to gete Rhodes so lyghtely as Antony had sayde. For the cyte was so strong and the knyghtes were so noble, that they wolde rather lese their lyues in fyghtyng for crystes lawe : and for the welfar of Krystendom, then euer to see in their lyf Rhodes in subiectyon of the Turke. Som of

the turkes sayden that Rhodes lyghtly sholde be had. And that sith the tyme that Antony came to Constantinople whiche were but. iii. yeres : the lorde Mayster of Rhodes couth not pourueye for so many dyffautes of the cytee : lyke as the renegate Antony Melagolo had told and gyuen hym to understande. Therefore hyt was fynally and in alle haste concluded in the foresayd parlement and counseyle. That both by lande ; and by see they sholde make them redy for to goo to the siege of the said cytee of Rhodes.

And furthermore were there called many connyng men in makyng of instrumens of werre, that is to saye Bombardes, gownes, culuerynes, serpentines and such other. Amonge the whiche was one called George, renegate ; a man of subtyl witte that dwelled in Constantinople and ther had wyfe and children. And for his subtil witte and grete connyng in makyng of suche instrumentes of werre ; had of the Turke grete rewardes, which George, vv. yeres afore passed had ben in Rhodes, the which Cytee thenne was not so stronge as now. And whenne the Turke commanded, that the cytee of Rhodes shuld be poutrayd and pepynted on a table and shewed unto him. Amonges alle other this George brought the best patron drawn and pourtrayed. And so by him and by other the Turke toke for the last conclusyon to send and laye siege to Rhodes. Consydering that with instrumentes of werre al maner of walles may be thrawn down. And also consydering hys grete power and myghte : by the whiche he had conquered and goten. ii. Empyres. vii. kyngdommes and many other landes and places. He also consydered the grete goodes and profettes the whiche he might haue of Rhodes, for almoche as he knewe the grete comodytees and strenght of the same cytee of Rhodes, bothe by lande and by see. And furthermore ymagyned, yf he had Rhodes that he myght ordeyne werres agaynest many other landes, bothe este and weste. Also this Turke knewe ryght wel ; that the sayd Rhodes was an Isle of grete name and of goode ayer : and that Rhodes in olde tyme was of grete amyte and chierte with the Romaynes. And also he thoughte, yf he myght haue the forsayd cytee of Rhodes : he shuld lyghtely put under his subiectyon al other countreyes aboute : and so in conclusyon he shuld conquer and subdue al the londes from the see called Ægeum unto the see called Poneum. That ys to say from the est part of the world to the west part. Notwithstanding somme of his cappetaynes counseyled hym that he sholde not laye siege to Rhodes. And that was token of his euyll auenture. Neuerthelesse by his commandement, his men of werre came toward Rhodes, both by lande and by see. And they that went by see ; sayled on til tyme they arryued to a countre called Eycya. And felbe days after that they were arryued there with their nauceye came also theder the other grete oste by land ; and soo they met ech other in the foresayd countrey of Eycya which is but vii. myles from

Rhodes. And they carryed with them by see grete instrumens of werre. That ys to say Bumbardes, gownes, serpentynes with many other instrumens of werre, for they were so grete and so many that they could not bryng them fro Counstantinople: but saylyng with shippes and galeyes: And of the sayd naueye and compagne was Basse; that ys to say capetayn in english a Greke whiche was of the noble hous called Palliogolus: the which when he shuld take shippyng asked after Antony Melagolo. And hit was told him that four dayes afore he was myscheuously slayne in Counstantinople. Therefor he toke with him Dymetryus renegade sclauie to the sayde Antony.

And anon after theire departyng fro Constantinople by see: the Turke send as sayd-ys his other oost by land that wente ferre aboute by the countreyes of Asya for fere lest cryston men shuld knowe theyre entente. The Turke also closed and stopped alle maner of passayges of his landyes, saue the secrete wayes that his oste wente. Neuerthelesse the lord mayster of Rhodes by his grete witte and dylygence had knowlege of alle this array. For the Turke had messengers that were not all trewe; for som of thayme told thayre maysters conseyle. But when the oste that wente by lande came to Eycye the Rhodyans had grete meruayle what they wer. And the turkes made a commyn scandyr to dysceyue the Rhodians and saydyn that theyr lord the gret Turke was dede, and they were sende thedyr to kepe the contrey of Eycye from harm of ennemyes. But the lord mayster of Rhodes had knowlege of al thees wyles and falsede of the Turke. And therefore he wyth grete dylygence made strong wyth men of werre and bytaylles all the holdes, both castelles and forslettes within the Isle of Rhodes. That ys to saye, Fongon, The Castylle of Scynt Petre, Feracle, Eynde, Monolew. And alle the people of the Isle of Rhodes wythdrewe to the stronge holdes with their goodes and catelles. And the barle that was rype lyghtly they gederyd hyt uppe and toke hit with thaym. And because that whete and other maner of cornes were not alle rype they plukkyd thaym uppe fro the ground as they were and broughte thaym to the townes and holdes.

And whenne thay were in wyng of these werkys with grete haste and furye the wache that was on the toppe of the hylle besyde Seynte stephen shewed a token and a knowleche: that in the west toward Constantinople was on the see saylyng a grete nombre of shippes. And thenne the most parte of the peple of rhodes wente unto the hye places and sawe them. And anone the samme shippes wente toward a town called Physcom. Whiche ys in the countreye called Eycye upon the see syde. vvii. myles from Rhodes: and there they landed and receyued the menne of werre that, came theder by land by the countrey of asya as I have sayd afore. And thenne they tourned theyme in the see toward Rhodes, ande so in a shorte tyme they were at the bankes of the Isle of Rhodes, And the nombre of

the shippes that came to the bankes of Rhodes was a honderd. And this was in the yere of our lorde a thousand four hondred and four schore the v. kalendre of the month of June. And anon with grete dylygence they voyded their shippes of the men of werre and of their ordonnances. And the menne of werre made their parkes and their tentes strongly upon the hylle of seint Stephen afore sayd. And afterward they dyscharged theyr ordonnance on the see banke under the hyll. But they myghte not see theire ordonnances and instrumens of werre whiche were on the see banke under the hylle : be cause of the hyennesse of the hylle. And so anone the shippes wente and come agayne from the banks of Rhodes to Physcom bringing wyth theyme at euery tyme their men of werre toward Rhodes.

And in the meantime whyle somme of the turkes on horsebake and on fote the most hardyest ranne to the walles of Rhodes wyth grete menasing and crakyng. And the Rhodyans wyth grete manhode wente agaynest theyme, and putte theyme to flyght and slewe many of theyme. And ni the nexte daye folowyng the turkes made agayn an other assaute whiles the Rhodyans were at dyner. But also they were putte to flyghte and som of theyme to deth. But there was one of the knyghtes of Rhodes the which auentured him selfe to ferre and was slayne of the turks. And thenne they toke hys hede and putte yt on a spere and ranne with grete myrth and joye to their companie and oste. And the body was broughte to Rhodes wyth the rayement. The turkes anone after sette thre bombardes of grete vyolence in the chyrcheyarde and gardens of Seynte Antony : whiche was but a lytill space from Rhodes. And with thees bombardes they studyed and thoughte to thralbe downe the hye toure and stronge place of Rhodes called, the toure of Seynte Nicolas : and couered their bombardes wyth grete logges and trees and bourdes of grete defence. But whenne the Rhodyans had spied it they also ordeyned thre grete bombardes agaynes the oste of the turkes : whiche casted throe the ryghte syde of theire oste grete and myghty stones : which dyd theyme grete harme.

And in the mornyng folowing George the grete gonner, of the whiche we haue sayde afore : came sodenly as amasid man to the dyche of Rhodes toward the palays of the Lord mayster, and saluted and greted the Rhodyans frendely and mekely cryed and prayed, that he myght come in to the citee, and so he was resceyued. And be cause that he had the rayement and leuerey of the Turke, somme smote at hym. But many dyffended hym and brought hym unto the Lord mayster of Rhodes. This George was a personable man and welbesene : of grete eloquence, and of grete malyce, a ducheman borne. And anone he was asked : Whiche was the cause of hys comyng theder. He answerde. For the fayth and relogyon of Jhesu cryste, and for the welfare and worship of all crystendom. And be

cause that he forsoke the fals bylue of the Turke : therfore he was receyued with grete joye. And also his purpos was gretely preyed yf he wold abyde stedfastely in hyt as he sayde. Anone after yt was asked him what ost the Turke had sende agaynest Rhodes, and what nombre of fyghtyng men : and what ordenance of instrumens of werre. George with boldenes and with witte : and as it semed with troth answerd to the questyons and sayd, that the turk had the nombre of an hondred thousand fyghtyng men, and xvi. grete bombardes euerychon of xxii. fote of lenght, of the whiche the lest casted stones euery stone of iv. spannes in compas aboute. But within Rhodes were many opynyons and dyuers sentences of the comyng of the sayd George from the Turke to crysten folke. For somme sayd : that he came as a spy. And that afore thys tyme he with grete malyce had done many thynges agaynest god. And specyally had forsaken crystes lawe, and that for certayn he werked nowe for to betraye Rhodes. The moste parte sayde : that he was a grete mayster in makyng of instrumentes of werre, and that he was a defensyble man in what somuer place he was in : and that he came to Rhodes as a penytent man that had forsaken his fayth and his maker : and that suche a wyse man as he was : wolde not come to Rhodes allon to dysceyue such a prudent man : as the lord was : and such a grete sclyshyp of knyghtes of Rhodes. And so was thought for the beter : that George shold abyde in Rhodes.

But anone fewe days after, somme that loued the crysten fayth in the ost of the Turke shotte arowes with lettres into Rhodes : whiche lettres were fonde and warned the Rhodyans : to be ware of the treason of George. Therfore the lord mayster commanded anone, that George sholde be kepte with. vi. myghte men whiche sholde take hylde on hym. But neuertheles he herde and had at alle owres Georgy's conseyle to suche proucyons that belongeth to engynes and instrumentes of werre, After this the Turkes with grete myght of bombardes and other instrumentes of werre laboured daye and nyghte to putte down and ouerthrawe a place whiche was a quarter of a myle wythin the see by the weste banke of Rhodes : which maked with her walles and wynges a pleasaunt hauen to shippes and galeyes. and ys called the tour of Seynt Nycholas, and it was made in the old tyme and after the olde and hygge making of walles. The sayde tour was sette so nygh the citee of Rhodes be cause that no persone by lande nor by water shold come to Rhodes withoute their lycence. And also the mouth of the hauen and that place was so streyte, that nether galeye nether shippe myght entre, but only one at ones, and aboue thys porte was the forsayd seynt Nycholas toure, the which was made of the Rhodyans within this hondred yeres. And the Turkes thoughte : that if they had this tour in their subiectyon : that they shold lyghtely ouercome Rhodes, considering the grete commodityte of the hauen and of

the selfe place of the tour. And therefore they casted agaynes the tour thre hundred grete stones of bombardes and brake the toure stoutely and put hit in a grete danger to be ouerthrowne, and in much lasse space thenne euer the Rhodyans thoughte that hit sholde haue ben possible. But neuerthelesse the nether olde auntyon wall stode steadfastely, for hyt was made in olde tyme of a bygge matere and substance. And anone the lord mayster alleway proudent and helpe came to the tour with a bargye ful of men, and made reparacyons with stones and trees, as in suche a tyme the case requyred, and putte in the tour many fyghtyng men and the manlyest of hys orse, the which sholde be the strenghte and the kepning of that place in the toure that was so beten in the syde toward the west : that ther was lefte in no maner of reparacyon : but with bandes and nombre of strong men. After that thees proucyon had been mode in the forsayd tour : they ordeyned men of werre under the walles of the cytee and under the walle uppon the banke of the see : the whiche was from the castell of Saynte Peter unto a certayne place called Mandracke, and there were men on horsebake and on fote, that shulde let the Turkes to come to land in that coste : and there abot the see is at euery tyde flowe and ebbe : wherefore were there thrust done pypes and tonnes and tabelles full of nayles : so that the Turkes whosomeuer ebbyng befel shulde not passe ouer. And ferther more was made another grete proucyon : in that parte of the cyte under the lord mayster stode in clene harnesses, for in that part were ordeyned bombardes and other grete instrumentes casting grete stones for to breke the galeyes of the Turkes, and also under the tour that the Lorde mayster kepte there lytill shippes fylled with gonne poudre and brymme stone and other such thynges : the whiche when the galeyes of the Turkes came ner shulde be putte in fyre to the destructyon of the galeys of the Turkes. And whenne thees thynges were so ordeyned : all the Rhodyans with manhode abode from daye to daye, and from oure to our : that the Turkes shulde gyue theym assaute, and in the mornyng next folowing the Turkes came with fifty galeyes from the hylle of Seynt Stephen aforsayd toward the cytee and they thoughte shortely to come a lande, and there they made a grete cry and a grete noyse with trompes and taberetys and other such instrumentes be cause that they shold make afered oure folke of theym for their grete noyse. But anone after whenne the Turkes with there galeyes came nere the toure aforesayd : the bombardes and other instrumentes of werre which were there ordeyned, brake with grete might the grapes of the Turkes and put theym offe from the cost with their grete myscheffe. And in thys dede the Lord Mayster of Rhodes hym selfe came oute of the walles of the sayd toure wyth hys compayne : for to fyghte hand for hand with the Turkes. And there were overthrowne and putte to deth. vii honderd Turkes and many were wounded, and many drowne, as somme sayden. that came to Rhodes from the

Turkes. After thys the Lord mayster clene armed and ryding upon a myghty hors came agayne to Rhodes with his feleshypp: as an Emperour victoryous, and came to the chyrche: Where was the ymage of oure lady: called our Lady on the hylle of Felerne; whiche place ys full of myracles. and there he kneled downe and yold thankyngeſ and louynges unto God and oure lady of his victorye, and afterward came to hys pallys and howshold for to refreshe hys companye. And so whenne the Turkes saw, that they coude not ouercome the forsayde toun: they purposed to breke the walles of the cytee with great bombardes and gonnes in dyuers places of the same cytee, and that, be cause that the payssance and might of the Rhodyans shold be dyuyded, and that they shold not be all in one place; as they had been late in defence of the forsayd toure of Seynte Nycolas, and also they dede yt for more lyghtely to ouercome the strengthe of the forsayd toure. Therefore in the nyghte nexte folowyng the Turkes with grete noyse broughte grete bombardes and gonnes toward the walles of Rhodes in that syde of the cytee where as the Jues had kepyng wache and defence by the comandement of the lord mayster. and be fore the sayd walles they putted. viii. grete instrumentes: whiche casted grete stones in the cyte. And had made ronde aboute bollewerkes to the instrumentes, be cause that the Rhodyans shulde not hurte theym. Another grete instrument they putted atte fote of a hylle toward the Weste: aboute the which hylle stode the galowes of the justyce of Rhodes: and from that place they casted grete stones in Rhodes, on that part of the cytee where the wynde mylnes were, and brake theim all to peeces. Whenne the Lord mayster saw the purpos and the wyles of hys enemyes whiche had then made moche more strenghte and myghte than euer they had done by forc: he ordeyned in Rhodes processyons generalles with grete deuccyon of hym and alle hys people of Rhodes. And after that they had made theyr prayers to God and to our lady in whoes quarell they faught: the Lorde mayster anon commanded to putte down the houses and habytacyons of the Jues that were within the cytee by the walles: called the Jure of Rhodes. Also were there made wythinne the cytee of Rhodes grete and mighty dyches: for the sauynge of the body of the cytee, yf the Turkes gate the fyrste walles. And therefore they made day and nyghte grete workes, as walles of tymbre and many other thynges defensybles, to the whiche, labour euery creature in Rhodes of alle maner of aage bothe men and women of alle maner states putted and aplied theym selfe and theyre goodes wyth grete wylle and grete deuccyon for Jhesus sake. And in thees whyle, the bombardes and grete gonnes of the Turkes casted downe and destried the walles of the cytee of Rhodes, wyth so grete myghte and strengthe and withe soo grete wonder: that alle they that were in Rhodes, strangers and other olde and yong of all the countreyes of crystendom sayd,



that they herde neuer strokes of bombardes so grete and so horryble as thylk were. The fals traytour George sayde also, that hyt was impossible after hys thynkyng to fynde in all the world such instrumentes of werre, that were so grete and harryble of noyse as they were, for they of a towne called Reede whych ys an hondered myles from Rhodes toward the eest herde the grete brute and the grete noyse, as they sayd afterward. And also for to shewe and declare the meruaylous gretenesse of the sayde bombardes and gones : the grete pyles and postes strong and myghty that were stykked in the gronde behynde atte taylor of the forsayde grete bombardes gaue suche grete and myghty shakynge, that the howses of Rhodes other whyles shaked in suche a wyse lyke yf hyt hadde ben a yerthquake. But they of Rhodes alleway besy and proudent stopped wyth trees the grete ruine of theyre walles, and made also many dyches wythinne the cytee. The Turkes vexed also the Rhodyans wyth many other and dyuers instrumentes of werre, for they ordeyned rond aboute the foresayde Cytee of Rhodes certayn instruments of werre the whyche ben called Slynge or Engynes. And the Turkes with suche instrumentes of werre casted in to the eyere a pype full of grete stones the whyche fell upon the houses of Rhodes and putted theym in a wrecched ruine wyth gret murdre of theym that were within for that tyme : and furthermore they putte in a grete thoughte and sorowe alle the hole cytee of Rhodes. for noo persone was sure in hous wyth oute he were in a kaue. But neuerthelesse the prudente and wyse Lorde Mayster and hys noble conseyll fond a remedye as hit foloweth. For anone he commanded : that alle maner of women and all folk of yong aage and olde aage, not able for to fyghte shulde be putte by the walles of the towne in a voyde place. for the guyse of the cytees ys, to haue next the walles suche a voyde place. And there were made myghty schaffoldes the whiche were not so hye as the walles of the cytee. for be cause that the Turkes sholde not aspye hyt. for in suche voyde place they casted noo stones : but into the myddes of the cyte. The yonge men able to fyghte kepte theym sel and eshewed the castynge of the stones in the day lyght. And in the nyght they hyded theym in strong places and kaues, so that by the myracles of god and prayers of crysten people fewe men or bestes of the cyte were hurted. The Turkes not understanding howe God pourned and kepte the Rhodyans harmless, ordeyned two grete slynjes in a hye place toward the weste : from the whiche they might seen all the cyte of Rhodes. and fro thens they casted grete stones in the myddes of the cytee. In thees meane whyles whenne thees thynges were so ordeyned : the grete Basse of the Turke sawe and consyderyd, that the dylygence of the Lord mayster Noyed moche to hys power and to his counseyles. Therefore he dysposed by meane whyles to putte to deth the forsayd Lord Mayster of Rhodes. And ordeyned two Turkes, of the whyche

one of theyme shulde goo and yeld hym selfe to the Rhodyans for to lyue in Crystes fayth and telle the Rhodyans, that another of the Turkes whiche was hys fellowe sholde also come to Rhodes and forsake the fals bylue of the Turke. But the Basse, that ys to saye the cappetayne of the Turkes had ordeyned, that the same sclau shold bring poyson into Rhodes: wyth whiche the Lorde Mayster sholde be putte to deth: and be cause that thees two Turkes shold auenture theym selfe to poyson the Lorde Mayster: the Basse had depromysed theym many grete rewardes. But be that came to Rhodes afore hys sclave as we haue sayde was in talking and in hys purpos: and in alle hys delynge in Rhodes fonde inconstante and varyante. Wherefore anone the Rhodyans had demyng and playne oppnyon: that he was come for to worke som trayson. And so after dyligente and straye examynacyon: he confessed the trayson and hys boldenes and therfore was he putte to dethe as a traytre. The daye nexte folowyng hys sclawe no thyng knowyng of this: came toward Rhodes. but the crysten men stroke sore upon hym, wherfore he fledde and torned again to the Turkes, and so the Basse was begyled of his trayson. In thees whyles the Turkes werred agays one syde of the cyte called the Warde of the Italyans. and in a derk nyghte they came so nygh that they putted gonnes and grete bombardes upon the bankes of the dyches: and made grete strengthe wyth trees rond abowte that they sholde not be broken with no maner shottes of the Rhodyans. But anone after they were spyed and sene. Wherefore there was a conseyle made in Rhodes: Where fyfty lykkely yong men and veray louers of oure lord Jhesu Cryste promysed them selfe there to deye in the quarell: or to destroye in that same nyghte the sayd grete bombardes and gonnes with alle theire araye. And so a Knyght of the ordre of Seynt Johan was capeteyne to the sayd fyfty likkely yong men. and they came pryuely by the bothome of the dyche wyeth certayne ladders whiche they broughte wyth thym to the bankes wher as the bombardes and gonnes were; and made suche a fray that the Turkes fledde away fro the bombardes: and. x. of theym were slayne. and also they destroyed alle that ordonnaunce and casted in the dyche. And thys done the forsayd fyfty yong men wyth theyre capetayne came agayne in to the cyte of Rhodes as men vycorious. Wherefore the Lord Mayster of Rhodes gaue unto theym many worshypfull geftes be cause of theyre virtuous monhode: and for to gyue courayge and exhortacyon to alle other. And they were resceyued in Rhodes wyth grete glorie and joye and also they had grete thankynges of all the people of Rhodes. Therefore fewe dayes after that thys was done: the Turkes for despyte and grete annoye of the foresayde thynges whiche were done unto theyme made anone redy a grete ordonnaunce and came agayne unto the tour of Seynt Nycolas for to haue it: and anon with

their bombardes boldeley they casted downe the bollewerkes and forslettes. And as faste as they casted theym downe the Rhodyans repaysed them agayn. The Turkes also made a longe brigge of the length of a quater of a myle. the which reched from the banke there as the Turkes laye : unto the banke of Seynt Nicolas toure. and was so large : that. vi. men on horseback myghte ryde a fronte, and was made with voyded pypes and with bordes strongly nayled upon them. and purposed to bryng the same brigge by craft into the water, and they fested and knytted strongely to the sayde brigge grete and myghti ropes whiche had in thother ende strong ancures : whiche ancures they fasted with a bote to the nether bank of the tour, so that the brigge with the drawyng of the corde and flotyng shulde haue reched to the sayd banke.

Anone after that the Rhodians had knowleche of thees werkes. a shipman wel experte in swymmyng : wente by nyghte and cutted the cordes fro the ancre and knyted thim unto a stone of the banke : so that lyghtely whenne the Turkes drewe the corde : they knewe wel that they were begyled of the Rhodyans : thoughte and ordeyned that they wold brynge the forsayd brygge theder wyth grete strenghte. and nombre of botes being full of rowers whyche botes were conduced and leded with xxx. galeyes of grete defence, and with. vii. or. viii. grete and myghty ful of gownes and bombardes for to caste downe the forsayd tour, And after that to putte in ruynethe hauen and walles of the cytee. And also they ordeyned certayn bargyes to bryng to lande the moste manly men of werre of the Turke, whiche sholde fyghte hand for hand with the Rhodyans. In the meane while that they whiche were on the brigge, and they of the shippes shulde fyght agaynest the tour, and sholde araye the brigge and puttee their men and instrumentes of werre atte grounde, the lorde mayster asked counseyl of all the most proued knyghtes and crysten men that ther were moste manly and moste wyse. And of them selfe of Rhodes whiche were ful of wysedom and bolde manhode. And there was geuen counseyl. that the tour sholde be strenght with dyches round abowte. And be cause that yt was grauell and stone, the lord mayster with grete cofres hyred a thousand labourers with pykes and shouels, whiche nyght and daye dyd that they were commanded. And where the toure was feble and in ruyne : were ordeyned agaynest the fyrste assaute men of werre : and also were ordeyned men of werre in the netherest dyche : to helpe the Rhodyans yf nede were, for they dred, that the Turkes, shold haue assauted the cytee and the tour al at one affray. Therfor the lord mayster putted also strenght of men into the walles of Rhodes whiche were beten downe with bombardes. That ys to saye in the Warde of thytalyans and in the Warde of the Jues. And for cause that alle the helthe and defence of the cytee was in the

welfare of the sayd tour : euery man wyth one voys cryed, that the toure sholde be dyligently and manly kepte. Where afterwards the knyghtes, bothe of latyn tonge and grekes tonge dyd worshipfully as cuer dyd Achylles or Hector. But two yong men soldyers of the sayd toure threwe downe theyr harnesse in the see to thentente to be Turkes. And afterward when thys was knowen : they for their synnes and defautes were byheded. And so after this : aboute the. xvi. day of the moneth of July the yere aforesayd in the tyme of mydnighte, the turkes came and pryuely by water and by lande for to come to the toure : and with theyre labour and payne broughte the brigge to the fote of the tour and made thenne a stoute and horryble crye, as they haue in theyr guyse afore that they begynne to fyghte. But our crysten folke anon herde and perseyued their boldnesse. Wherefore wyth crosse bowes and bombardes they kepte theym offe : and brake their brigge. When many Turkes were drownyd and four galeyes and cazekes were broken with stones and instrumentes of theym that were in Rhodes, and many of the Turkes that were sette a land by the brygge from the shippes and galeyes anone after were slayne and many wounded, and som of the shippes were brente, and somme of their gables were kytte ; so that the shippes were loste in the see. Neuerthelesse the Turkes from thother banke manly and stoutely faught and defended their people aforsayd wyth castyng to the cyte and toure : grete stones of bombardes and of gonnes and wyld fire and arowes of bowes and balestres. And soo all the nyght frou twelfe the clocke unto v in the daye they faught all by derke : but as the fyre of the bombardes and the flammes of the wyld fyre gaue lyghte. And so after that the Turkes were put oute : with their grete dammage and harme, and that the men of Rhodes had the vyctorye ; a man myght haue seen thre days folowyng ded men of the Turkes partye : casted and lyyng in the banke of the see toward Rhodes. Whiche were fonde arayed wyth golde and syluer and precious clothyng, and parte of their araye was seen flotyng in the see. Whiche geyre and araye was taken uppe by the crysten men with grete profyte and wynnyng. And in al so moche more was this victorye in gladnesse to the Rhodyans : be cause that there were slayne many noble Turkes : and in especial a cozyn of the grete Turke. the deth of the whiche was a grete sorowe to the grete Turke and to all hys people. And hys body was fond on the banke spoyled of the Rhodyans, And anone after thys grets fyghtyng : somme Turkes yeld them to the crysten people of Rhodes : and said for trouth that ther were slayne of the Turkes thre thousand and fyfe hondred : and that the Basse by the space of thre dayes : for sorow and thoughte spake wyth noo man of hys compaye nor with none other. And anon auysed the grete Turke of thys grete myschyfe that was befall to theym. And in so moche

more was wroth, that wyth so grete deth of hys people and myscheuous harmes, he had noo thyng profyted agaynest Rhodes : nether agaynes the forsayde tour : but with his dammage and shame was putte offe, as not able wyth alle that feleshyp and myght to ouercome the cyte of Rhodes, as he had pourposed. And so after that the Turkes sawe : that they could not wynde the tour by strengte and myghte : anone they tourned theire fantasie and studyed wyth alle theire vertue and myghte to assaute the cyte, and in especyal they made grete assaut agaynest the walles that were keppe by the Jues : and also agaynes the walles that the nacyon of Italye keppe and defended, and shorteley the Turkes made grete dammages and hurtes all abowte the walles of the cytee wyth theire grete gonnes and bombardes : in so moche that they thought to come by wyles and subtyll meanes nygh to the walles of the cyte. And so they made certayn dyches in dyuers places of the fylde : and couered theym with grene bowes, and afterward they putted erthe and turues uppon the same : and myned fast and pryuely. for they pourposed to come, to fyghte hande for hande wyth the Rhodyans. Also they ordeygned certayne logges whiche they coueryd wyth grene bowes be cause that they sholde not be knowen : and fro thens they shotte to the walles of Rhodes grete bombardes, gonnes and serpentynes in such a wyse : that no man durst loke out of the walles of the cytee to theire fylde and to theire werkes. And in this whyle the Turkes fylled a certayne place of the dyche of the citee wyth trees and stones and suche other thynges : so that the dyche was made equall and playnnysed unto the heyght of the broken walle : soo that lyghtely they myght come for to feyghte hande for hande with the Rhodyans. Then the Lorde mayster of Rhodes consydering and seeyng openly the grete hardnesse of the Turkes : and also the grete daunger that the cytee of Rhodes stode in, he as a noble Prynce louyng and defendyng hys sayde cytee and lordshyppe and hys people : wyth grete dylygence called alle hys famous knights and gouernours of hys werres : and thenne he declared and shewed to theyme wyth prudence and eloquence the grete daungers ; in the whiche by the furye and open boldnesse of the Turkes, Rhodes the most crysten cytee stode in. Feu dayes by fore the siege of Rhodes, was come from the royaume of Fraunce to Rhodes the myghty and excellent knyght named Antony Daubusson : whyche was brother to the Lorde mayster of Rhodes. Thys Antony Daubusson was Lord in Fraunce of a place whiche ys called Montelyon, a man of grete wyse- dom and counseyle, stronge and hardy in werres and bataylles. He departed from the royaume of Fraunce wyth a compaignye of clenly and lykkely men : whiche were able to fyght under what somme euer baner that belonged to Kyng or Emperour. And hys entente and purpos was : to uysyte deuoutely the blessed and holy sepulchre of

oure sauour Jhesu Cryste in Jerusalem. But whenne he understode and perceyued : that the grete Turke sholde come and laye siege to Rhodes : he pourposed to helpe and defende the cyte of Rhodes wyth juberte of hys life and alle his companye, for he thought : that in noo maner place : nor in noo maner wyse he myghte spende hys bloode better : and more for the welfare of hys soule : thenne there : Where he shulde fyghte for the preyous name of our lord Jhesu Cryste : and for the ryghtfull quarell of all crysten fayth : and to kepe from captyuete of the Turkes the noble cytee of Rhodes. And be cause that hys holynesse and hys herty loue whiche he hadde to the fayth of Jhesu cryste : and also that hys grete manhode was well knowen to all the knyghtes of Rhodes : the Lorde mayster hys brother and al the counseyle of Rhodes elected and tholed hym capetayn and gouernour of all the men of werre. And soo manly and wysely he ordeyned and dysposed hym to all suche thynges that shulde noe to the pourpos of the Turkes and that shulde helpe and strength Rhodes for the worshyp, helthe and perpetuell glorie of alle crystendom. And anone after thys he hadde a grete oste in whyche were many gentyll knyghts, Baylyffes, pryours, maystres and breheeren of the order of Seynte Johan. Of whyche the most manleyst men were borne in England and in Fraunce, and in other countreyes of the weste. There were also merchauntes and men of dyuers occupacyons of the selfe Rhodes, and of many places of Grece : the whyche in wysedom and prudence of many worldly thynges hadde knowlege and experyence. All thees to geder, wyth one worde, wyth one herte, and wyth one feyth, pourposed and swere to defende and kepe the cytee of Rhodes : or elles to dye gladdely and kyndely for hym that dyed for us alle. And soo anone after a man of Grece, wyse and experte in sieges counseyled the Lord mayster and the Rhodyans to make and ordeygne an engyne called Trebuke lyke a slynge, which was grete, hye and myghty and casted grete and many stones into the hoste of the Turkes. and so bye thys meanes the Turkes were in grete fere and juberte, for their loggyses and tentes were broken and smyten to grounde : wyth moche and grete dammage and hurte to theire gonnys, bombardes, serpentynes and all theire ordonances of werre : so that in fewe dayes they receyued thees hurtes and dammages without nombre. We haue sayd be fore : how the Turkes fulfilled a parte of the dyche by the wallis wyth stones. And be cause that the Rhodyans coude not Royde hit openly : they mayd a mine under the ground : by the whyche pryuely they bare the stones in the cytee.

But the Turkes anon perceyued : that the heyght and the hepe of the stones was made lesse : and that they coude not crepe uppe by that weye : but yf they hasted thyme : and soo they dyd. But before the Rhodyans wyth grete besynesse fonde a remedye to the defautes of the

walles : the whiche the Turkes by that syde of the cytee had caste downe to the grounde. For they withinne the walles not ferre from the dyche made a fronte of a walle wyth stakes and erthe in the myddes, and wyth bulkes thrustred strongly togeder and tempered it wyth water lyke as they make a mud walle : and upon this walle the putted gones, culuenynes, wildfyer and barelles full of pyche and sulfur, and grete hepes of stones and suche thynges : that shuld lette the Turkes to clymbe uppe : so that it was a pleasur to see their besynes agaynes the begynnynge of the Turkes assaute. And for to haue in thys werke counseyle : was the oder brought the forsayde George traytour, but he shewed no cunningg in the defence of the cytee as he hade promised, and as the Rhodyans trusted. For the fals and wikked man was pleasyd to see so grete ruyne in the pryncypall walles of Rhodes : and hoped that lyghtely the Turke sholde ouercome yt. Neuertheles to couer hys mynde and malyce counseyled the Rhodyans to sette a bombarde : Whiche sholde caste from thens to the hoste of the Turkes for to brek theire bombardes. but he wyste well that therof they shulde haue grete hurte : wheder it had ben a token and couenant betweene the Turke and hym : or of hys owen anyse dyd hyt : thynkyng that the Turkes shuld in so moche more caste toward that parte for to breke the Rhodyans shottle. But so as he counseyled was done, and anone gret harmes and dammages came of hyt. for the Turkes dressed alle the shotte thederward and gaue greter hurte to the broken walle. And in thys whyle were shotte arowes into Rhodes wyth lettres : whyche blamed George that he dyd not hys deuer for the Turke in Rhodes : in also moche, as he gaue not theyme certayne tokens of the ruyne and condycon of the cytee. But they knewe not howe George was keppe for suspecte within Rhodes : as a man gylte of trayson, and whenne hyt was tolde and shewed to George. He answered boldly and wyth shrewed langayage : wherefore the Rhodyans hadde hym in suspecyon and was putte in pryson. And anone by wyse men was examined and fonde varvabe in hys answers : Wherefore wyth tokyns sufficyent was putte to tormente : where he confessed : howe that the Turke hadde sende hym theder to betraye Rhodes yf he might, as he hadde betrayed many other places in Grece. Whych confessyon he affirmed also after wythoute torments. And said : how the Turke had byd hym : yf Rhodes myght not thenne be goten : to abyde neuertheless in Rhodes all the siege tyme : and longer to espye all the condycyons and maners of their defences : and that efterward he sholde telle yt to the Turk for to paruye strengier siege : and more to the pourpos of victorye. For the Turkes entencion : was fynally, to haue the cyte of Rhodes. Wherefore George hadde of him grete yestes and rewardes. But anone after George was dampned to deth : and in the syghte of all the people of Rhodes for hys trayson : and myscheuous

counseyles was hanged. and anone after every man of Rhodes retourned againe to kepe their plase wyth grete gladdeness that George the fals traytour of Crystes fayth and he that hadde studied to putte too deth so many noble and worshipfull knyghtes : and to defowle and rauessche so many goode and honeste women and holy vyrgyns, hadde atte laste fond an nynde accordyng to his traysons and myscheuous dedys. Anon after thys the Basse that is to say the grete Capetayne of the Turke caused other lettres to be casted in the cytee of Rhodes : in whyche letters he conforted and warned the bourgeyses of the sayd cytee and other merchauntes of crystendomme whyche were wythinne the cytee : that they shulde fynde the meanes for to yelde theymeand delyuere to hym the cytee and they sholde haue their landes and their goodes saue and their bodyes free and hameless. for he wolde but onely destroye the knyghtes and men of werre beyng wythin Rhodes : and yf they dyd otherwyse, he menassed to putte them all equally to deth. And by thees meanes and cauetles he ymagyned and thoughte to putte dyuycyon amonges the people of Rhodes. but he coude not spede his fals purpos : for he fonde theyme juste and trowe to God and to the ordre of Rhodes. And soo when he saw and consyderid that thys fayled hym : he yet by wytenesse sende a man in the nyghte time to the dyches of Rhodes : in that syde of the cytee where stode a chyrche of our Lady called Clemonatra. Thys man was a Greke and late had forsaken crystys fayth and wente to the Turke. And so thys Greke called and sayde to theym that wached ther : that the grete capeteyn of the turke wolde send an embasseteur to the Lord Mayster : yf the Rhodyans wolde lete hym goo and come sure. They answered and said to thys man : that they were well contente, that the grete capeteyne of the Turke sholde send his embasseteur unto the dyche and bollewerke of that syde of the cytee : and that there sholde be a noble man, the whiche shuld gyue an answere for the lorde mayster : and so the day next following the Embassetoure of the forsayde Capetayne came theder : and sayde : how that he had grete meueayle : that such a lytill cytee wolde wythstande and resyete agaynest the great myght and puyssaunce of the dredefull Turke : which had conquered. II. Emperys and so many Kyngdommes. Therfore he exhorted theym, to haue pyte of theyme self : and not to be the cause, that the cytee of Rhodes sholde be taken by the assaute of the Turkes and by strong hand. for thenne the Turkes sholde putte too myschieffe and to vyolence, bothe men and women beyng in the cytee of Rhodes : and furthermore he said that yf they of Rhodes wold desyre and take of the Turkes peas they sholde haue hyt, wyth possessyon of the selfe Rhodes, and wyth alle their goodes ; or elles they shulde be putted utterly to destructyon wyth all maner cruelte ; and so he manashed to be, in shorte tyme to come ; and therfore he bede them answere : Wheder

they wolde peas or werre. Thenne anon answered the noble and prudente knyghte that there was for the Lorde Mayster ; and sayde. howe that the Rhodyans hadde grete meruaylle : that the Turkes with so grete nauewe, and wyth so stronge armee; agaynes the honour of all manly werryers shulde exhorte theyre enemyes to peas. And sayd that the Rhodyans understode and knewe ryght well the feynte and fals colour of theym ; for they wyste well ; that they dyd hit because that they shold preue their hertes. Therfore he sayde that nether by yestes nether by menaasshes they wold do shame to crystendom : and that wythinne the cyte of Rhodes was a comyn accorde among the Grekes and Latynes and al the people of Rhodes, which wold rather dye for Crystes fayth ; thenne to be of amyte and of the lawe of Mahumete. And yf it so were, that the Turkes wolde brek uppe their siege and turn agayne to their countreie ; and efter sende embassetoures to Rhodes for peas ; the Rhodyans sholde thereof by conseyl gyue theym an answer. but syth that they were as myghty in armes : they bade theym use and doo that they came fore : and that thorough the grace of Jhesu they sholde knowe, that they had not to doo nor to fyghte wyth men of Asea their countrey couwerdes and unherty as women. but they sholde knowe wel and perceyue, that they shulde fyghte and be in hande wyth strong manly and crysten people of Rhodes. After the whyche answer, the Turkes wyth loe chiere and halfe shamefly countenance, departed from theym and tourned agayne to their oste and to theyre capeteyne. And so the more that the Rhodyans wythstode the Turkes wyth myghte and wysedom ; the more waxed the Turkes furyous agaynes Rhodes. And anon after this wyth grete bombardes, gones, engynes and all other suche instrumentes of werre; they vexed and greued the Rhodyans, and purposed to preue. yf the dedys of the Rhodyans sholde accorde wyth theyre grete wordes. Therfore like wyse as they hadde done a grete and horryble assaute agaynest the toure of Seynte Nycolas, xxxvii dayes passed, ordeyned and dressed alle theyre bombardes and gones of werre, all their ordonnance and their myghte agaynest the pryncypal strengthe and most neweste walles of the cyte of Rhodes ; howe be hyt that they were, large, newe and fortifyed wyth myghty toures and bollewerkes ; neuertheless wyth castyng of thre thousand and fyfe hondred grete bombardes stones : they were horrybly brused and thrausen downe. And many worshipfull places and howses of the Rhodyans by that side wyth the hurte and the ruyne of that newe walle were myscheously broken and destroyed all to pieces. The whyche myserable case and horryble ruyne fered many of the Rhodyans hertes and putted theyme to more thoughte and sorow thenne euer they were sythen the comyng of the Turkes theder. But the Lorde Mayster as a stedfaste Prince trustyng in Jhesu Cryste and hys swete mother Marye and in Seynte Johan

Baptyste confortd alle the people ; so that nether the knyghtes, nether the pryours nether the baylyffes of the ordre, nether merchaunts, neither people in Rhodes were aferd ; but gladly as the case stode were redy and contente to fyght hand for hand with the Turkes at broken walles and playne place. And so the Turkes by two or thre evenyngs followyng came to the dyches wyth their taberettys and made songes of myrthe ; hopyng that wythin shorte dayes they sholde get Rhodes. And the Rhodyans from tother syde of the broken walle answered theym as merely agayn wyth trompettes and claryons. but the Lorde mayster knowyng by hys prudence, that anone-wyth grete myght and furye the Turkes wold come theder to assaute the cytee ; he forte-fyed the walles with knightes of hys ordre and most manlyest werryers : and he hymselfe by the broken walle was full of besynes, to teche, warn and comforte all the people abowte hym ; and was redy and atte alle oures abode to gyue socour to the knyghtes and werryers on the walles. and so were all hys people from the hiest degree unto the loest dysposed.

In thys whyle the Turkes made theym redy in their oste for to come and gyue assaute And made a commyn crye : that the grete Turke gaue theym all the goodes that were in Rhodes : and that they sholde take al the yonge chyl dren in Rhodes and cause them to renaye their fayth ; and they that were aboue. x. yeres unto xx sholde haue their throtes kette : and all that were aboue that aage yf they were taken alyue shuld be persed thorow the sondemente and thorow the hede with a long stake. Wherefore they bare wyth theyme to the assaute viii thousand stakes : and that the Turke all onely was contente to be victoryous and lorde possessour of Rhodes. Anone after thys crye all the Turkes came toward Rhodes. but afore that they gaue assaute after their fals belue called to their helpe Mahumete and washed them all naked in rennyng water : in token of purgacyon of their synnes : and after they arayed them eurychon after their qualyte of werre : and brought sakkcs with theym to putte in the goodes of Rhodes : and tyed at their gyrdles ropes to bynde their pryssoners. for they hoped in their God Mahumete : that they wythoute fayle shulde haue vycторыe of Rhodes. The day afore that the grete assaut and bataylle was : they casted and shotte agaynes the walles grete stones of. viii. the gretest bombardes that they had and casted downe the reparacyons and defences, whiche the Rhodyans hadde made in the broken walles : so that they stroke and slewe the waches that were on the walles : in the night folowyng. for they fessed neuer thorowyng throe alle that daye and the nyghte and alle the mornyng of the daye folowyng : in the whyche the grete assaut was made : soo that ther myght no body surely stande upon the walles ner might stop the grete ruyne of the walles. for in a shorte space were casted thre hondred

grete stones. After that the Turkes hadde fynysished their shotte of bombardes : the fyfte Kalendre of the moneth of Auguste abowte. viii. the klokke in the mornynge they came to geder with grete multitude and nombre : and anon they passed ouer the dyche. Whiche was then fulfilled with the ruine of the broken walles of the cytee : and so anon they clymed lyghtely upon the walles and more lyghtely, then the Rhodyans coude in their syde with laddres and steyses. Anone after that thees Turkes wer upon the walles they slew all the crysten men that there were in defence, and setted uppe there their standerdes and baneres : afore that the Rhodyans mighte clymbe up with ladders to the walles. But anone the Rhodyans were there redy at their handes : and was gyuen of one parte and other a grete and horryble crye. for all the parte of Rhodes cryed on Jhesu Cryste : and the Turkes cryden Mahumete. And the Rhodyans feghtyng manly and hertely resysted and withstode the grete presse of the Turkes. There was the worshipful Lorde, the Lorde of Montelyon capeteyn of the men of werre of Rhodes : and brother to the lorde mayster. And ther were wyth hym many manly knyghtes of the ordre of Rhodes : and many other men of the cytee : of the whyche in that assaute and bataylle, somme were slayne and many wounded. Ther were in that syde of the assaute four grete ladders in dyuers places for to goo up and downe to the walles : of the whiche one was towaard the Jues streete. and by that ladder and place the Turkes came down into the cytee. But anon the Lorde Mayster commanded : that yt shulde be kytte and pulde downe. And he hym selfe in an other place by : wente upon the walles with hys companye : and there they faught agaynes the ennemyes of Crystes fayth, as manly as euer dyd the Romaines for their empyre. And slewe many Turkes : and fynally beted theym offe. But the Lorde mayster had fyue woundes. Of the whiche one was juberte of hys lyfe : but throe the grace of God and helpe of leeches and surgeons he was helped. And he for hys grete manhode and noble herte to God and to hys ordre, through all Rhodes was called the very fater and defensour of the cytee and of the fayth of Jhesu Cryste. And what grete glorye and lawde he and his companye with all the fighting men of Rhodes that same daye deseured : the noble and manly acte shewed hyt. for upon the broken walles of Rhodes. and in the places that we haue sayde were. ii thousand and fyue hundred Turkes in clene harnessse : and behynde them folowyng by and by, as after was sayde and knowen, was the nombre of. xl. thousand Turkes. They that had gotten the walls faughte for to thruste down and caste offe the walles the crysten fightyng men : whiche manly resysted their furye. and so the feghtyng endured by the space of two oures that hit was in dowe, who shulde haue the victorie. for other whyles a man shulde haue demed that the Rhodyans shuld haue

hadde the vycторыe. and anone the fortune chaunged so that no man sholde haue thought the contrary but that the Turkes sholde haue had the vycторыe of the Rhodyans and their entente of the cytee. for fortune was so meruayllously instable. But after the space of two owres through the grace and pytee of almyghty God and through the vertu and manhode of the worshypful and tryumphaut the lorde mayster of Rhodes and of hys people the Turkes were putted utterly to the worse. They were smyten downe and beten out offe the walles wythe soo grete myghte and manly feyghting of the Rhodyans whyche so stedfastly came upon theym : that the Turkes with grete fere and hastynes tourned their bakkes and fledde in so great nombre that in fleying one hurted and wounded the other. But one of the fayrest and manlyest dedys, and worthy to be had in mynde : that the crysten people dyd in that assaute agaynest the Turkes was : whenne a grete nombre of the Turkes wer upon the walles in the warde wher the Jues had the keyng ; and there the sayde Turkes stoutely feghted for to thrawe downe of the walles the crysten feghtyng people for to haue entree to the cytee. But the crysten people with grete manhode and furour : threwe downe of the walles to the cytee thre hondred of theyme : and more, whiche were slayne : som with the horryble falles besyde the walles. for the hienes of the walles was. xl. fote to that the Rhodyans clymmed uppe with ladders : and often myghte not for the shotte of the engynes of the Turkes come upon the walles : but by a certayn token of the ryngyng of a lytyl belle at the wache place of the walles, somme were brused and afterwards slayne wythe the Rhodyans wepons : soo that all the strete called the Jure by the walles was full of their bloode and caren : and theder afterward came all the people of Rhodes to see and to wonder the myschue of the Turkes. Also after that the Turkes soo myscheuously and shamefully were putte offe of their assaute and fledde to their hoste : the Lorde Montelyon brother to the worshipfull Lorde Mayster pursued theym into their tentes and loggyses : where they slewe many of theym and spolyed theyme of their juelles and harnesse of werre, and of their harness and standardes : the whyche they brought with theyme to Rhodes, cryyng merely and making grete joye : and entered agayne into Rhodes through the broken walles, for a perpetuall memorye. In that assaute for certayn were slayne thre thousand and fyue hondred Turkes. for their carens and bodyes were fonde and sene and nombred by the Rhodyans : of the whiche bodyes and carens som were fonde within the cytee, som upon the walles and many in the dyches, and by the see syde. And because that all Rhodes stanke of their carens bothe within and withoute : they putted theym all on a hepe out of the towne : where they ordeyned grete fyre : with the whiche anone they were brente and consumed to asshes. But they that after-

ward yolde theym to the fayth of Jhesu Cryste and forsoke their fals belue because of certayn myracles that folowen : sayde for trouth, that syth the Turkes came to laye siege to Rhodes there were of theym slayne. ix. thousand : xviii. thousand sore wounded and greuously hurte. And thys they knew in so moche, as the grete Basse of the Turkes made after thys grete assaut comptes and rekenynges of al his men of werre. and so the Basse with all hys oste was full of sorowe and confused. But alweye God Almyghty for to delyuere fynally Rhodes hys crysten cytee : and for to put the Turkes in greter confusyon : shewed sodenly in thys assaute. hys loue and hys swete grace to hys crysten people. For by the comandment of the lorde mayster : a baner of Jhesu Criste Another of our Lady, and another of Seynte Johan Baptiste patrone of the ordre of Rhodes : were sette uppe on the walles whenne the batallyle was on bothe sydes moste sharpest. And anon after the Turkes sawe properly in the myddst of the clene and bryght eyer, a crosse all of shynyng gold, and also sawe a bryht vyrgyne : whiche had in her hande agaynes the oste of the Turkes a spere and a shyld : and in that syght also apired a man clothed in pouer and vyle arraye : whiche was accompanied wyth grete nombre of fayre and welbesene men in armes : as yf he wolde haue comen downe to the helpe of Rhodes. By the crosse of golde we may justeley understande : oure saueour Jhesu Cryste. And by the vyrgyne we may understande, oure Lady the blessed Marie. And by the man poverly clothed we may understande the holy Seynt Johan Baptyste Patron and auonore of the ordre of Rhodes : whiche was acompanyed with seyntes and angeeles of God for to helpe the Rhodyans. The whyche goddeley and heuenly syghte putted playnely the Turkes in soo grete wonder and fere : that in no maner after they toke conseyll among theyme to leue their entente and tourne agayne to theire countreye, so that through the grace and myracles of almyghty God and through the prudence and dylygence of the lord mayster and fayth and manhode of the knyghtes of Rhodes : and obeysaunce of all the people : Rhodes was and ys preserued and kepte fro the Turkes captyuyte. Thees myracles in so moche more are in confirmacyon and deuocyon to our crysten fayth because that the first knowleche of theym came by the vysyon and syghte of the Turkes ennemyes to oure crysten fayth. For afterward many of them forsoke theyre fals belue : and were crysfened withinne the cytee of Rhodes : Wher as they openly and constantely to all the men of Rhodes, wyth one accorde and with a good couraye made fayth and knowleche of the goddeley and heuenly vysyon which they had seen And for certayn euery wyse man may knowe : that without Goddes hande to sewe crysten men might not have resysted and withstanded so grete nombre of Turkes : and in especyall when that they were upon the walles, for then they thought to have merely and with lytill payne the victorye of the cytee

of Rhodes. But who letted theyme then to come down from the walles to the cyte : afore that the Rhodyans clymed with ladders to feght with them and dryue them fro the walles : certainly hit was none other but God. Who was he, that blynded their witte, so that anon after the first assaute, they ordeyned not another agaynes our crysten men : whiche by the first assaut had been pyteously hurte and wonded and were all wery of feghting. Hit was none other but God. Who was cause of the deth of so many of theym in the space of two owres in the grete and last assaute : but God and hys angels that were seen in the bright eyer. Who was he shortly putte from the vyctorie of Rhodes so lytil a cyte in comparyson of others : and as Constantinople and Nygrepoint and many moe strong and myghty : the Turke strong and full of pryde. Wel may euery man knowe that it was more Goddes acte than mannys. Wherfor we alle crysten men mekely and with herty deuocyon, ought to yelde graces and louynges to almyghty God : Whiche had preserued Rhodes the keye of al Crystendom from the foule and unrightful subiectyon of the Turkes : whyche hath ben for their euyll purpos smyten and kytte in pieces as bestes and fynally were putted from their entente. But for to come to the conclusyon of the departyng of the Turkes. Anone after that they were putte to flyght ; they went bakward a large myle : and there they made newe tentes, to abyde there : whyle they charged their shippes and galeyes with all their ordonnances of werre. And in this whyle they charged in lytle galeyes, daye by daye and oure by oure their men that were sore hurte and wounded with all their arraye : And brought theym agayne to the contrey of Eycya : where they had receyued them whenne they came toward the siege of Rhodes : and ther they abode tyll they were hole, and might turn agayn to Turkea their countreye. That same Eycya was to theim a grete commodye and to all their entente, for from thens to Rhodes was but a narowe see, called they Eycyon.

And not ferre from the banke of the sayde Eycya was a grete and old towne called Physcum ; where fyrst they abode the nauery that came from Constantinople ; and now also were there wyth their woundes dylegently refresshed. And so anon after thys ; yt was concluded among the Turkes ; that all the oste shold depart from Rhodes. Therefore they made a great wast and destroyed all maner gardens and vynes and all other thinges the whiche they supposed that might doo ease to the Rhodyans. Also they brende many houses and spolyled fyldes of their catelles ; and charged their shippes with grete nombre of the bestes of the Isle of Rhodes, whiche myght not afore the siege be brought into the cytee nor into the holdes of the Isle, and in the mene whyle that the Turkes made them redy to retourne to their countreye, were spyed and sene from Rhodes two grete shippes in the see saylyng from the weste toward Rhodes ; and anone the Rhodyans hadde demyng that they were shippes of crysten-

dome and of their fryends. And as they supposed, yt was. for they wer send theder by the moste crysten kyng and most deuote Prynce Ferrand of Arragone kyng of Naples to helpe and socur the Rhodyans againes the Turkes for the shippes were charged with the moste manlyest menne of werre of his Kyngdome and of all stuffe necessarye for theym. Thees two mighty and strong shippes entred frendly toward the porte of Rhodes aboute one the klokke after mydday in the beholdyng and syght of the Rhodyans : whyche therfor made grete joye and myrthe ; and yolded grete graces and lounges to almighty God. But whenne they shold entre into the hauen the Turkes shotte grete stones of bombardes to theyne : soo that one of theym was sore hurte in the maste. and the tother eschued and escaped the shotte, withoute hurte. and so they casted theire ancurs and abode the tyde that they might entre into the hauen : but toward the nyghte the see waxed so rough, that they durst no longer abyde there at the ancure. Therfore the shippe that had not been hurt toke the brode see, and thoder shippe because that her maste was in a grete daunger ; doubtyng to sayle ; abode the tyde wyth all paryll and juberte. But throe the grace of God almyghty at that tyde entred surely into the hauen of Rhodes. The nexte daye folowyng the other shippe whiche had taken the brode see retourned agayn to entre into the port ; but a myle and a half fro the porte the wynde falyed her and myght sayle no farther : Wherefore the Turkes sende theder twenty galeyes of their nauye arrayed and armed for to fyght and overcome the shipp and bring her to the Turkes ; but the crysten men of Naples and of Secyll that werre in the shyp bare theym ; quyted so manly ; that nether for the shotte of the galeyes nor for the might of soo many men that there were agaynest so fewe ; they neuer made token of fere, but resysted so manly and vertuously, that in the space of thre owres that the bataylle dured they slewe four times greter nombre of Turkes than they were them self soo that they had the better hande and were vycctorious. and in that fyghtyng was slayne the chiefe capetyne of the sayde galeyes. and wyth thys harme and shame retourned the galleys to their partye : and the shippe of the crysten men the day followyng with full sayle and standerds of victorie and triumphe entred into the port of Rhodes. Thyes two shippes broght to Rhodes mery tythings. for they brought the Popes lettres which were rede and declared openly before all theym of Rhodes that wold gyue audyence thereto. In the whiche lettres our holy father the Pope comforted and desired of the lord mayster and of all the crysten people that was within Rhodes. that for the loue of Jhesu Cryste they wolde with all their herte and manhode withstande the furye of the Turks : and that in al haste they shold have socours from Italye both by see and by land in so grete numbere and strength, that they shoulde be lightly delyuered of the trauyles and peynes : whiche bothe daye and nyghte the Turkes wyth all besynes imagined and

wrought against them. for the hoste of the crysten people shuld come so mighty : that wyth the grace and helpe of God they shuld be able to gyue battayle to all the puyssance of the Turkes and have the beter of hit. Wherefore the Rhodyans alle wyth one voyce thanked God and magnefyed wyth grete praysynges our holy father the pope Syxte the fourth : the whiche tythynges wente anone to the oste of the Turkos and fered theym sore wherefore they the sooner departed from Rhodes : where they had ben at the siege thre moneths saue a daye. and tourned agayn to the countrey of Eycya and arryued to the grete town Physcum : where then taryed and refreshed thym nere hand. xi. dayes : and afterward tourned to their countrey, with their grete shame, their hurte and grete myschefe. Deo gracias.

[In this reign, the first mention of the king's poet occurs. John Kay was appointed poet laureate to Edward IV. It is extraordinary that Kay should have left no pieces of poetry to prove his pretensions in some degree to this office, with which he is said to have been invested by the king at his return from Italy. The only composition he has transmitted to posterity, is a prose English translation of a Latin history of the Siege of Rhodes. In his dedication addressed to King Edward, or rather in the title, he styles himself, "hys humble poete laureate." Although this, our laureate, furnishes us with no materials as a poet, yet, his office, which here occurs for the first time under this denomination, must not pass unnoticed in the Annals of English Poetry.—*Murray's Reprint*, 1870, p. 401.]

ESSAYS
ON
CHIVALRY, ROMANCE,
AND
THE DRAMA.

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

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ESSAY ON CHIVALRY

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THE primitive sense of this well-known word, derived from the French *Chevalier*, signifies merely cavalry, or a body of soldiers serving on horseback ; and has been used in that general acceptation by the best of our poets, ancient and modern, from Milton to Thomas Campbell.

But the present article respects the peculiar meaning given to the word in modern Europe, as applied to the order of knighthood, established in almost all her kingdoms during the middle ages, and the laws, rules, and customs, by which it was governed. Those laws and customs have long been antiquated, but their effects may still be traced in European manners ; and, excepting only the change which flowed from the introduction of the Christian religion, we know no cause which has produced such general and permanent difference betwixt the ancients and moderns, as that which has arisen out of the institution of chivalry. In attempting to treat this curious and important subject, rather as philosophers than as antiquaries, we cannot, however, avoid going at some length into the history and origin of the institution.

From the time that cavalry becomes used in war, the horseman who furnishes and supports a charger arises, in all countries, into a person of superior importance to the mere foot-soldier. The apparent difficulty of the art of training and managing in the field of battle an animal so spirited and active, gave the *ἵπποδαμος Έκτρος* or *Domitor equi*, in rude ages, a character of superior gallantry, while the necessary expense attending this mode of service attested his superior wealth. In various military nations, therefore, we find that horsemen are distinguished as an order in the state ; and need only appeal to the *equites* of ancient Rome as a body interposed betwixt the senate and the people, or to the laws of the conquerors of New Spain, which assigned a double portion of spoil to the soldier who fought on horseback, in support of a proposition in itself very obvious. But, in the middle ages, the distinction ascribed to soldiers serving on horseback assumed a very peculiar and imposing character. They were not merely respected on account of their wealth or military skill, but were bound together by a union of a very peculiar character, which monarchs were ambitious to share with the poorest of their subjects, and governed by laws directed to enhance, into enthusiasm, the mili-

tary spirit and the sense of personal honour associated with it. The aspirants to this dignity were not permitted to assume the sacred character of knighthood until after a long and severe probation, during which they practised, as acolytes, the virtues necessary to the order of Chivalry. Knighthood was the goal to which the ambition of every noble youth turned ; and to support its honours, which (in theory at least) could only be conferred on the gallant, the modest, and the virtuous, it was necessary he should spend a certain time in a subordinate situation, attendant upon some knight of eminence, observing the conduct of his master, as what must in future be the model of his own, and practising the virtues of humility, modesty, and temperance, until called upon to display those of a higher order.

The general practice of assigning some precise period when youths should be admitted into the society of the manhood of their tribe, and considered as entitled to use the privileges of that more mature class is common to many primitive nations. The custom, also, of marking the transition from the one state to the other, by some peculiar formality and personal ceremonial, seems so very natural, that it is quite unnecessary to multiply instances, or crowd our pages with the barbarous names of the nations by whom it has been adopted. In the general and abstract definition of Chivalry, whether as comprising a body of men whose military service was on horseback, and who were invested with peculiar honours and privileges, or with reference to the mode and period in which these distinctions and privileges were conferred, there is nothing either original or exclusively proper to our Gothic ancestors. It was in the singular tenets of Chivalry,—in the exalted, enthusiastic, and almost sanctimonious, ideas connected with its duties,—in the singular balance which its institutions offered against the evils of the rude ages in which it arose, that we are to seek those peculiarities which render it so worthy of our attention.

The original institution of Chivalry has been often traced to the custom of the German tribes recorded by Tacitus. "All business," says the historian, "whether public or private, is transacted by the citizens under arms. But it is not the custom that any one shall assume the military dress or weapons without the approbation of the state. For this purpose, one of the chief leaders, or the father or nearest relation of the youthful candidate, introduces him into the assembly, and confers on him publicly a buckler and javelin. These arms form the dress proper to manhood, and are the first honour conferred on youth. Before he receives them, the young man is but a member of his own family, but after this ceremony he becomes a part of the state itself."* The records of the northern nations, though we cannot rely upon their authenticity with the same unlimited confidence, because we conceive most of the legends relating to them have been

* *Germania Taciti.*

written at a much later period than the times in which the scene is laid, may be referred to in confirmation of the Roman historians. The Scandinavian legends and *Sagas* are full of the deeds of those warriors whom they termed heroes or champions, and who appear to have been formed into an order somewhat resembling that of Chivalry, and certainly followed the principal and most characteristic employment of its profession; wandering from court to court, and from shore to shore, bound on high adventure, and seeking, with equal readiness, their fortunes in love and in war. It would not be difficult to deduce from this very early period some of those peculiar habits and customs, which, brought by the Gothic conquerors into the provinces of the divided empire of Rome, subsisted and became ingrafted upon the institutions of Chivalry. Tacitus, for example, informs us, that among the Germans, and especially among the Catti, every youthful champion permitted his beard and hair to grow, and did not shave them until he had performed some signal feat of arms. In the like manner, as the general reader may have learned from that irrefragable authority, Don Quixote de la Mancha, a knight who received his order was obliged to wear white armour, and a shield without a device, until, by some daring and distinguished achievement, he had acquired title to an honourable badge of distinction. If this correspondence of customs shall be thought too far-fetched, and too general, the next, which we also derive from Tacitus, is too close to be disputed. The German warriors, who piqued themselves upon this bravery, used, at the commencement of a war, to assume an iron ring, after the fashion of a shackle, upon their arm, which they did not remove until they had slain an enemy. The reader may be pleased to peruse the following instance of a similar custom from the French romance of *Jehan de Saintre*, written in the year 1459, and supposed to be founded, in a great measure, upon real incidents.* The hero, with nine companions at arms, four of whom were knights, and five squires, vowed to carry a helmet of a particular shape, that of the knights having a visor of gold, and that of the squires a visor of silver. Thus armed, they were to travel from court to court for the space of three years, defying the like number of knights and squires, wherever they came, to support the beauty of their mistresses with sword and lance. The emblems of their enterprise were chained to their left shoulders, nor could they be delivered of them until their vow was honourably accomplished. Their release took place at the court of

* We may here observe, once for all, that we have no hesitation in quoting the romances of chivalry as good evidence of the laws and customs of knighthood. The authors, like the painters of the period, invented nothing, but, copying the manners of the age in which they lived, transferred them, without doubt or scruple, to the period and personages of whom they treated. But the romance of *Jehan de Saintre* is still more authentic evidence, as it is supposed to contain no small measure of fact, though disguised and distorted. Probably the achievement of the Polish knights may have been a real incident.

the Emperor of Germany, after a solemn tournament, and was celebrated with much triumph. In like manner, in the same romance, a Polish knight, called the Seigneur de Loiselench, is described as appearing at the court of Paris wearing a light gold chain attached to his wrist and ankle in token of a vow, which emblem of bondage he had sworn to wear for five years, until he should find some knight or squire without reproach, by encountering with whom he might be *delivered* (such was the phrase) of his vow and enterprise. Lord Herbert of Cherbury mentions, in his memoirs, that when he was made Knight of the Bath, a tassel of silken cordage was attached to the mantle of the order, which, doubtless, had originally the same signification as the shackle worn by the German champion. The rule was, however, so far relaxed, that the knot was unloosed so soon as a lady of rank gaged her word that the new Knight of the Bath would do honour to the order; and Lord Herbert, whose punctilious temper set great store by the niceties of chivalrous ceremony, fails not to record, with becoming gratitude, the name of the honourable dame who became his security on this important occasion.

Other instances might be pointed out, in which the ancient customs of the Gothic tribes may be traced in the history of Chivalry; but the above are enough to prove that the seeds of that singular institution existed in the German forests, though they did not come to maturity until the destruction of the Roman empire, and the establishment of the modern states of Europe upon its ruins.

Having thus given a general view of the origin of chivalry, we will, I. briefly notice the causes from which it drew its peculiar characters, and the circumstances in which it differs so widely from the martial character as it existed, either among the ancient Greeks and Romans, or in other countries and nations. II. We will attempt a general abstract of its institutions. III. The rise and progress of chivalry,—its effects upon the political state of Europe,—and its decay and extinction, will close the article.

I. Agreeably to this general division, the general nature and spirit of the institution of chivalry falls first under our consideration.

In every age and country valour is held in esteem, and the more rude the period and the place, the greater respect is paid to boldness of enterprise and success in battle. But it was peculiar to the institution of chivalry, to blend military valour with the strongest passions which actuate the human mind, the feelings of devotion and those of love. The Greeks and Romans fought for liberty or for conquest, and the knights of the middle ages for God and for their ladies. Loyalty to their sovereigns was a duty also incumbent upon these warriors; but although a powerful motive, and by which they often appear to have been strongly actuated, it entered less warmly into the composition of the chivalrous principle than the two preceding causes. Of

patriotism, considered as a distinct predilection to the interests of one kingdom, we find comparatively few traces in the institutions of knight-hood. But the love of personal freedom, and the obligation to maintain and defend it in the persons of others as in their own, was a duty particularly incumbent on those who attained the honour of chivalry. Generosity, gallantry, and an unblemished reputation, were no less necessary ingredients in the character of a perfect knight. He was not called upon simply to practise these virtues when opportunity offered, but to be sedulous and unwearied in searching for the means of exercising them, and to push them without hesitation to the brink of extravagance, or even beyond it. Founded on principles so pure, the order of chivalry could not, in the abstract at least, but occasion a pleasing, though a romantic development of the energies of human nature. But as, in actual practice, every institution becomes deteriorated and degraded, we have too much occasion to remark, that the devotion of the knights often degenerated into superstition,—their love into licentiousness,—their spirit of loyalty or of freedom into tyranny and turmoil,—their generosity and gallantry into harebrained madness and absurdity.

We have mentioned devotion as a principal feature in the character of chivalry. At what remote period the forms of chivalry were first blended with those of the Christian religion, would be a long and difficult inquiry. The religion which breathes nothing but love to our neighbour and forgiveness of injuries, was not, in its primitive purity, easily transferable into the warlike and military institutions of the Goths, the Franks, and the Saxons. At its first infusion, it appeared to soften the character of the people among whom it was introduced so much, as to render them less warlike than their heathen neighbours. Thus the pagan Danes ravaged England when inhabited by the Christian Saxons,—the heathen Normans conquered Neustria from the Franks,—the converted Goths were subdued by the sword of the heathen Huns,—the Visigoths of Spain fell before the Saracens. But the tide soon turned. As the necessity of military talent and courage became evident, the Christian religion was used by its ministers (justly and wisely so far as respected self-defence) as an additional spur to the temper of the valiant. These books of the Old Testament which Ulfilas declined to translate, because they afforded too much fuel for the military zeal of the ancient Goths, were now commented upon to animate the sinking courage of their descendants. Victory and glory on earth, and a happy immortality after death, were promised to those champions who should distinguish themselves in battle against the infidels. And who shall blame the preachers who held such language, when it is remembered that the Saracens had at one time nearly possessed themselves of Aquitaine, and that but for the successful valour of Charles Martel, Pepin, and Charlemagne, the crescent might have

dispossessed the cross of the fairest portion of Europe? The fervent sentiments of devotion which direct men's eyes toward heaven, were then justly invoked to unite with those which are most valuable on earth,—the love of our country and its liberties.

But the Komish clergy, who have in all ages possessed the wisdom of serpents, if they sometimes have fallen short of the simplicity of doves, saw the advantage of converting this temporary zeal, which animated the warriors of their creed against the invading infidels, into a permanent union of principles, which should blend the ceremonies of religious worship with the military establishment of the ancient Goths and Germans. The admission of the noble youth to the practice of arms was no longer a mere military ceremony, where the sword or javelin was delivered to him in presence of the prince or elders of his tribe; it became a religious rite, sanctified by the forms of the church which he was in future to defend. The novice had to watch his arms in a church or chapel, or at least on hallowed 'ground, the night before he had received the honour of knighthood. He was made to assume a white dress, in imitation of the Neophytes of the church. Fast and confession were added to vigils; the purification of the bath was imposed on the military acolyte, in imitation of the initiatory rite of Christianity; and he was attended by god-fathers, who became security for his performing his military vows, as sponsors had formerly appeared for him at baptism. In all points of ceremonial, the investiture of chivalry was brought to resemble, as nearly as possible, the administration of the sacraments of the church. The ceremony itself was performed, where circumstances would admit, in a church or cathedral, and the weapons with which the young warrior was invested were previously blessed by the priest. The oath of chivalry bound the knight to defend the rights of the holy church, and to respect religious persons and institutions, and to obey the precepts of the Gospel. Nay, more, so intimate was the union betwixt chivalry and religion esteemed to be, that the several gradations of the former were seriously considered as parallel to those of the church, and the knight was supposed to resemble the bishop in rank, duties, and privileges. At what period this infusion of religious ceremonial into an order purely military first commenced, and when it became complete and perfect, would be a curious but a difficult subject of investigation. Down to the reign of Charlemagne, and somewhat lower, the investiture was of a nature purely civil, but long before the time of the crusades, it had assumed the religious character we have described.

The effect which this union of religious and military zeal was likely to produce in every other case, save that of defensive war, could not but be unfavourable to the purity of the former. The knight, whose profession was war, being solemnly enlisted in the service of the gospel of peace, regarded infidels and heretics of every description as the enc-

mies whom, as God's own soldier, he was called upon to attack and slay wherever he could meet with them, without demanding or waiting for any other cause of quarrel than the difference of religious faith. The duties of morality were indeed formally imposed on him by the oath of his order, as well as that of defending the church, and extirpating heresy and misbelief. But, in all ages, it has been usual for men to compound with their consciences for breaches of the moral code of religion, by a double portion of zeal for its abstract doctrines. In the middle ages, this course might be pursued on system : for the church allowed an exploit done on the infidels as a merit which might obliterate the guilt of the most atrocious crimes.

The genius alike of the age and of the order tended to render the zeal of the professors of chivalry fierce, burning, and intolerant. If an infidel, says a great authority, impugn the doctrines of the Christian faith before a churchman, he should reply to him by argument ; but a knight should render no other reason to the infidel than six inches of his falchion thrust into his accursed bowels. Even courtesy, and the respect due to ladies of high degree, gave way when they chanced to be infidels. The renowned Sir Bevis of Hamptoun, being invited by the fair Princess Josiane to come to her bower, replies to the paymims who brought the message,

" I will ne gou one foot on ground
For to speke with an heathen hound ;
Unchristian houndes, I rede ye flee,
Or I your heart's bloode will see."

This intemperate zeal for religion the knights were expected to maintain at every risk, however imminent. Like the early Christians, they were prohibited from acquiescing, even by silence, in the rites of idolatry, although death should be the consequence of their interrupting them. In the fine romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, that champion is represented as having failed in duty to God and his faith, because he had professed himself a Saracen for the temporary purpose of obtaining entrance into the palace of the Amial Gaudifer. " And when Sir Huon passed the third gate, he remembered him of the lie he had spoken to obtain entrance into the first. Alas ! said the knight, what but destruction can betide one who has so foully falsified and denied his faith towards him who has done so much for me ! " His mode of repentance was truly chivalrous. When he came to the gate of the last interior enclosure of the castle, he said to the warder, " Pagan, accused be thou of God, open the gate." When he entered the hall where the pagan monarch was seated in full state, he struck off, without ceremony, the head of the pagan lord who sat next in rank to him, exclaiming at the same time with a loud voice, " God, thou hast given me grace well to commence my emprise ; may our Redeemer grant me to bring it to an honourable conclusion ! " Many such passages

might be quoted to show the outrageous nature of the zeal which was supposed to actuate a Christian knight. But it is needless to ransack works of fiction for this purpose. The real history of the crusades, founded on the spirit of chivalry, and on the restless and intolerant zeal which was blended by the churchmen with this military establishment, are an authentic and fatal proof of the same facts. The hare-brained and adventurous character of these enterprises, not less than the promised pardons, indulgences, and remissions of the church, rendered them dear to the warriors of the middle ages; the idea of re-establishing the Christian religion in the Holy Land, and wresting the tomb of Christ from the infidels, made kings, princes, and nobles, blind to its hazards; and they rushed, army after army, to Palestine, in the true spirit of chivalry, whose faithful professors felt themselves the rather called upon to undertake an adventure, from the peculiar dangers which surrounded it, and the numbers who had fallen in previous attempts.

It was after the conquest of the Holy Land that the union between temporal and spiritual chivalry (for such was the term sometimes given to monastic establishments) became perfect, by the institution of the two celebrated military orders of monks, the Knights Templars and Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who, renouncing (at least in terms) the pomp, power, and pleasures of the world, and taking upon themselves the monastic vows of celibacy, purity, and obedience, did not cease to remain soldiers, and directed their whole energy against the Saracens. The history of these orders will be found in its proper place in this work; but their existence is here noticed as illustrating our general proposition concerning the union of devotion and chivalry. A few general remarks will close this part of the subject.

The obvious danger of teaching a military body to consider themselves as missionaries of religion, and bound to spread its doctrines, is, that they are sure to employ in its service their swords and lances. The end is held to sanctify the means, and the slaughter of thousands of infidels is regarded as an indifferent, or rather as a meritorious action, providing it may occasion the conversion of the remnant, or the peopling their land with professors of a purer faith. The wars of Charlemagne in Saxony, the massacres of the Albigenses in the south of France, the long-continued wars of Palestine, all served to illustrate the dangers resulting from the doctrine, which inculcated religion, not as a check upon the horrors and crimes of war, but as itself its most proper and legitimate cause. The evil may be said to have survived the decay of chivalry, to have extended itself to the New World, and to have occasioned those horrors with which it was devastated for ages after its first discovery. The Spanish conquerors of South America were not, indeed, knights-errant, but the nature of their enterprises, as well as the mode in which they were conducted, partook deeply of the

spirit of chivalry. In no country of Europe had this spirit sunk so deeply and spread so wide as in Spain. The extravagant positions respecting the point of honour, and the romantic summons which chivalry proclaimed to deeds of danger and glory, suited the ardent and somewhat Oriental character of the Spaniards, a people more remarkable for force of imagination, and depth of feeling, than for wit or understanding. Chivalry, in Spain, was embittered by a double proportion of intolerant bigotry, owing to their constant and inveterate wars with the Moorish invaders. The strain of sentiment, therefore, which chivalry inspired, continued for a long time to mark the manners of Spain after the decay of its positive institutions, as the beams of the sun tinge the horizon after the setting of its orb. The warriors whom she sent to the New World sought and found marvels which resembled those of romance; they achieved deeds of valour against such odds of numbers as are only recorded in the annals of knight-errantry; and, alas, they followed their prototypes in that indifference for human life, which is the usual companion of intolerant zeal. Avarice, indeed, brought her more sordid shades to complete the gloomy picture; and avarice was unknown to the institutions of chivalry. The intolerant zeal, however, which overthrew the altars of the Indians by violence, instead of assailing their errors by reason, and which imputed to them as crimes their ignorance of a religion which had never been preached to them, and their rejection of speculative doctrines of faith, propounded by persons whose practice was so ill calculated to recommend them—all these may be traced to the spirit of chivalry, and the military devotion of its professors.

The religion of the knights, like that of the times, was debased by superstition. Each champion had his favourite saint, to whom he addressed himself upon special occasions of danger, and to whom, after the influence of his lady's eyes, he was wont to ascribe the honour of his conquest. St. Michael, the leader of banded seraphim, and the personal antagonist of Satan,—St. George, St. James, and St. Martin, all of whom popular faith had invested with the honours of chivalry,—were frequently selected as the appropriate champions of the militant adventurers yet on earth. The knights used their names adjoined to their own, as their insignia, watch-word, or signal for battle. Edward III., fighting valiantly in a night-skirmish before the gates of Calais, was heard to accompany each blow he struck with the invocation of his tutelar saints, Ha! Saint Edward! ha! St. George! But the Virgin Mary, to whom their superstition ascribed the qualities of youth, beauty, and sweetness, which they prized in their terrestrial mistresses, was an especial object of the devotion of the followers of chivalry, as of all other good Catholics. Tournaments were undertaken, and feats of arms performed in her honour, as in that of an earthly mistress; and the veneration with which she was regarded seems occasionally to

have partaken of the character of romantic affection. She was often held to return this love by singular marks of her favour and protection. During an expedition of the Christians to the coast of Africa, Froissart informs us that a large black dog was frequently seen in their camp, which barked furiously whenever the infidels approached it by night, and rendered such services to the Christian adventurers by its vigilance, that with one consent they named it "The Dog of our Lady."

But although, as is incidental to human institutions, the mixture of devotion in the military character of the knight degenerated into brutal intolerance and superstition in its practical effects, nothing could be more beautiful and praiseworthy than the theory on which it was grounded. That the soldier drawing the sword in defence of his country and its liberties, or of the oppressed innocence of damsels, widows, and orphans, or in support of religious rights, for which those to whom they belonged were disqualified by their profession to combat in person,—that he should blend with all the feelings which these offices inspired, a deep sense of devotion, exalting him above the advantage and even the fame which he himself might derive from victory, and giving dignity to defeat itself, as a lesson of divine chastisement and humiliation; that the knight on whose valour his countrymen were to rely in danger should set them an example in observing the duties and precepts of religion,—are circumstances so well qualified to soften, to dignify, and to grace the profession of arms, that we cannot but regret their tendency to degenerate into a ferocious propensity to bigotry, persecution, and intolerance. Such, however, is the tendency of all human institutions, which, however fairly framed in theory, are in practice corrupted by our evil passions, until the results which flow from them become the very reverse of what was to have been expected and desired.

The next ingredient in the spirit of chivalry, second in force only to the religious zeal of its professors, and frequently predominating over it, was a devotion to the female sex, and particularly to her whom each knight selected as the chief object of his affection, of a nature so extravagant and unbounded as to approach to a sort of idolatry.

The original source of this sentiment is to be found, like that of chivalry itself, in the customs and habits of the northern tribes, who possessed, even in their rudest state, so many honourable and manly distinctions, over all the other nations in the same stage of society. The chaste and temperate habits of these youth, and the opinion that it was dishonourable to hold sexual intercourse until the twentieth year was attained, was in the highest degree favourable not only to the morals and health of the ancient Germans, but must have contributed greatly to place their females in that dignified and respectable rank which they held in society. Nothing tends so much to blunt the feelings, to harden the heart, and to destroy the imagination, as the wor-

ship of the VAGA VENUS in early youth. Wherever women have been considered as the early, willing, and accommodating slaves of the voluptuousness of the other sex, their character has become degraded, and they have sunk into domestic drudges and bondswomen among the poor,—the slaves of a harem among the more wealthy. On the other hand, the men, easily and early sated with indulgencies, which soon lose their poignancy when the senses only are interested, become first indifferent, then harsh and brutal, to the unfortunate slaves of their pleasures. The sated lover,—and perhaps it is the most brutal part of humanity,—is soon converted into the capricious tyrant, like the successful seducer of the modern poet.

“ Hard : with their fears and terrors to behold
The cause of all, the faithless lover cold,
Impatient grown at every wish denied,
And barely civil, soothed and gratified.”

CRABBE'S *Borough*, p. 213.

Habitual indulgence seeks change of objects to relieve satiety. Hence polygamy, and all its brutalizing consequences, which were happily unknown to our Gothic ancestors. The virtuous and manly restraints imposed on their youth were highly calculated to exalt the character of both sexes, and especially to raise the females in their own eyes and those of their lovers. They were led to regard themselves, not as the passive slaves of pleasure, but as the objects of a prolonged and respectful affection, which could only be finally gratified when their lovers had attained the age of mature reason, and as capable to govern and to defend the family which should arise around them. With the young man imagination and sentiment combined to heighten his ideas of a pleasure which nature instructed him to seek, and which the wise laws of his country prevented him from prematurely aspiring to share. To a youth so situated, the maiden on whom he placed his affections became an object of awe as well as of affection ; the passion which he indulged for her was of a nature as timid and pure as engrossing and powerful ; the minds of the parties became united before the joining of their hands, and a moral union preceded the mere intercourse of the sexes.

The marriages formed under these wise auspices were, in general, happy and affectionate.—Adultery was unfrequent, and punished with the utmost rigour ; nor could she who had undergone the penalty of such a crime find a second husband, however distinguished by beauty, birth, or wealth.* The awe and devotion with which the lover had regarded his destined bride during the years in which the German youth were enjoined celibacy, became regard and affection in the husband towards the sharer of his labours and the mistress of his household. The

* *Taciti Germania.*

matron maintained that rank in society which love had assigned to the maiden. No one then, says the Roman historian, dared to ridicule the sacred union of marriage, or to term an infringement of its laws a compliance with the manners of the age. The German wife, once married, seldom endeavoured to form a second union, but continued, in honoured widowhood, to direct and manage the family of her deceased husband. This habitual subjection of sensuality to sentiment, these plain, simple, virtuous, and temperate manners of the German females, placed the females in that high rank of society, which the sex occupies when its conduct is estimable, and from which it as certainly declines in ages or climates prone to luxurious indulgence. The superintendence of the domestic affairs was assigned to the German women, a duty in which the men seldom interfered, unless when rendered by age or wounds incapable of warfare. They were capable of exercising the supreme authority in their tribe, and of holding the honours of the priesthood. But the influence of the women in a German tribe, as well as their duties in war, will be best understood from the words of Tacitus.

“It is the principal incitement to the courage of the Germans, that in battle their separate troops or columns are not arranged promiscuously as chance directs, but consists each of a united family, or clan, with its relatives. Their dearest pledges are placed in the vicinity whence may be heard the cries of their females, the wailings of their infants, whom each accounts the most sacred witnesses and the dearest eulogists of his valour. The wounded repair to their mothers and spouses, who hesitate not to number their wounds, and to suck the blood that flows from them. The females carry refreshment to those engaged in the contest, and encourage them by their exhortations. It is related, that armies, when disordered, and about to give way, have renewed the contest, at the instance of the women; moved by the earnestness of their entreaties, their exposed bosoms, and the danger of approaching captivity:—a doom which they dread more on account of their females than even on their own;—insomuch that these German states are most effectually bound to obedience, among the number of whose hostages there are noble damsels as well as men. They deem, indeed, that there resides in the female sex something sacred and capable of presaging the future; nor do they scorn their advice or neglect their responses. In the time of Vespasian we have seen Velleda long hold the rank of a deity in most of the German states; and, in former times, the venerated Aurinia and other females; not, however, from mere flattery, nor yet in the character of actual goddesses.”

The tales and *Sagas* of the north, in which females often act the most distinguished part, might also be quoted as proofs of the rank which they held in society. We find them separating the most desperate frays by their presence, their commands, or their mantles, which

they threw over the levelled weapons of the combatants. Nor were their rights less extensive than their authority. In the *Eyrbyggja Saga* we are informed, that Thordisa, the mother of the celebrated Pontiff Snorro, and wife of Biarko of Helgafels, received a blow from her husband. The provocation was strong, for the matron had, in her husband's house and at his table, attempted to stab his guest Eyulf Graie, on account of his having slain one of her relations. Yet so little did this provocation justify the offence, that in the presence of the comitia, or public assembly of the tribe, Thordisa invoked witnesses to bear testimony, that she divorced her husband on account of his having raised his hand against her person. And such were the rights of a northern *mater familias*, that the divorce and a division of goods immediately took place between the husband and wife, although the violence of which Thordisa complained was occasioned by her own attempt to murder a guest.

We have traced the ideas of the Gothic tribes on this important point the more at length, because they show, that the character of veneration, sanctity, and inviolability, attached to the female character, together with the important part assigned to them in society, were brought with them from their native forests, and had existence long before the chivalrous institutions in which they made so remarkable a feature. They easily became amalgamated in a system so well fitted to adopt whatever was romantic and enthusiastic in manners or sentiment. Amid the various duties of knighthood, that of protecting the female sex, respecting their persons, and redressing their wrongs, becoming the champion of their cause, and the chastiser of those by whom they were injured, was presented as one of the principal objects of the institution. Their oath bound the new-made knights to defend the cause of all women without exception; and the most pressing way of conjuring them to grant a boon was to implore it in the name of God and the ladies. The cause of a distressed lady was, in many instances, preferable to that even of the country to which the knight belonged. Thus, the Captal de Buche, though an English subject, did not hesitate to unite his troops with those of the Comte de Foix, to relieve the ladies in a French town, where they were besieged and threatened with violence by the insurgent peasantry. The looks, the words, the sign of a lady, were accounted to make knights at time of need perform double their usual deeds of strength and valour. At tournaments and in combats, the voices of the ladies were heard like those of the German females in former battles, calling on the knights to remember their fame, and exert themselves to the uttermost. "Think, gentle knights," was their cry, "upon the wool of your breasts, the nerve of your arms, the love you cherish in your hearts, and do valiantly, for ladies behold you." The corresponding shouts of the combatants were, "Love of ladies! Death of warriors! On, valiant knights, for you fight under fair eyes."

Where the love or honour of a lady was at stake, the fairest prize was held out to the victorious knight, and champions from every quarter were sure to hasten to combat in a cause so popular. Chaucer, when he describes the assembly of the knights who came with Arcite and Palemon to fight for the love of the fair Emilie, describes the manners of his age in the following lines :—

“ For every knight that loved chivalry,
And would his thanks have a passant name,
Hath pray'd that he might ben of that game,
And well was him that thereto chusen was.
For if there fell to-morrow such a case,
Ye knowen well that every lusty knight
That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
Were it in Engellonde, or elleswhere,
They wold hir thanks willen to be there.
To fight for a lady ! Ah ! Benedicite,
It were a lusty sight for to see.”

It is needless to multiply quotations on a subject so trite and well known. The defence of the female sex in general, the regard due to their honour, the subservience paid to their commands, the reverent awe and courtesy, which, in their presence, forbear all unseemly words and actions, were so blended with the institution of chivalry, as to form its very essence.

But it was not enough that the “very perfect, gentle knight,” should reverence the fair sex in general. It was essential to his character that he should select, as his proper choice, “a lady and a love,” to be the polar star of his thoughts, the mistress of his affections, and the directress of his actions. In her service, he was to observe the duties of loyalty, faith, secrecy, and reverence. Without such an empress of his heart, a knight, in the phrase of the times, was a ship without a rudder, a horse without a bridle, a sword without a hilt ; a being, in short, devoid of that ruling guidance and intelligence, which ought to inspire his bravery, and direct his actions.

The Dame des Belles Cousines, having cast her eyes upon the little Jean de Saintré, then a page of honour at court, demanded of him the name of his mistress and his love, on whom his affections were fixed. The poor boy, thus pressed, replied, that the first object of his love was the lady his mother, and the next his sister Jacqueline. “Jouvencel,” replied the inquisitive lady, who had her own reasons for not being contented with this simple answer, “we do not now talk of the affection due to your mother and sister ; I desire to know the name of the lady whom you love *par amours*.”—“In faith, madam,” said the poor page, to whom the mysteries of chivalry, as well as love, were yet unknown, “I love no one *par amours*.”

“Ah, false gentleman, and traitor to the laws of chivalry,” returned the lady, “dare you say that you love no lady ? well may we perceive your falsehood and craven spirit by such an avowal. Whence were

derived the great valour and the high achievements of Lancelot, of Gawain, of Tristrem, of Giron the Courteous, and of other heroes of the Round Table,—whence those of Panthus, and of so many other valiant knights and squires of this realm, whose names I could enumerate had I time,—whence the exaltation of many whom I myself have known to arise to high dignity and renown, except from their animating desire to maintain themselves in the grace and favour of their ladies, without which mainspring to exertion and valour, they must have remained unknown and insignificant? And do you, coward page, now dare to aver, that you have no lady, and desire to have none? Hence! false heart that thou art."

To avoid these bitter reproaches, the simple page named as his lady and love, *par amours*, Matheline de Coucy, a child of ten years old. The answer of the Dame des Belles Cousines, after she had indulged in the mirth which his answer prompted, instructed him how to place his affections more advantageously; and as the former part of the quotation may show the reader how essential it was to the profession of chivalry that every one of its professors should elect a lady of his affections, that which follows explains the principles on which his choice should be regulated.

"Matheline," said the lady, "is indeed a pretty girl, and of high rank, and better lineage than appertains to you. But what good, what profit, what honour, what advantage, what comfort, what aid, what council for advancing you in the ranks of chivalry, can you derive from such a choice? Sir, you ought to choose a lady of high and noble blood, who has the talent and means to counsel and aid you at your need, and her you ought to serve so truly, and love so loyally, that she must be compelled to acknowledge the true and honourable affection which you bear to her. For believe there is no lady, however cruel and haughty, but through length of faithful service will be brought to acknowledge and reward loyal affection with some portion of pity, compassion, or mercy. In this manner, you will attain the praise of a worthy knight; and, till you follow such a course, I will not give an apple for you or your achievements."

The lady then proceeds to lecture the acolyte of chivalry at considerable length on the seven mortal sins, and the way in which the true amorous knight may eschew commission of them. Still, however, the saving grace inculcated in her sermon was fidelity and secrecy in the service of the mistress whom he should love *par amours*. She proves, by the aid of quotations from the Scripture, the fathers of the church, and the ancient philosophers, that the true and faithful lover can never fall into the crimes of Pride, Anger, Envy, Sloth, or Gluttony. From each of these his true faith is held to warrant and defend him. Nay, so pure was the nature of the flame which she recommended, that she maintained it to be inconsistent even with the

seventh sin of Chambering and Wantonness, to which it might seem too nearly allied. The least dishonest thought or action was, according to her doctrine, sufficient to forfeit the chivalrous lover the favour of his lady. It seems, however, that the greater part of her charge concerning incontinence is levelled against such as haunted the receptacles of open vice; and that she reserved an exception (of which, in the course of the history, she made liberal use) in favour of the intercourse which, in all love, honour, and secrecy, might take place, when the favoured and faithful knight had obtained, by long service, the boon of amorous mercy from the lady whom he loved *par amours*. The last encouragement which the Dame des Belles Cousines held out to Saintré, in order to excite his ambition, and induce him to fix his passion upon a lady of elevated birth, rank, and sentiment, is also worthy of being quoted, since it shows that it was the prerogative of chivalry to abrogate the distinctions of rank, and elevate the hopes of the knight, whose sole patrimony was his arms and valour, to the high-born and princely dame, before whom he carved as a sewer.

"How is it possible for me," replied poor Saintré, after having heard out the unmercifully long lecture of the Dame des Belles Cousines, "to find a lady, such as you describe, who will accept of my service, and requite the affection of such a one as I am?"—"And why should you not find her?" answered the lady preceptress. "Are you not gently born? Are you not a fair and proper youth? Have you not eyes to look on her—ears to hear her—a tongue to plead your cause to her—hands to serve her—feet to move at her bidding—body and heart to accomplish loyally her commands? And having all these, can you doubt to adventure yourself in the service of any lady whatsoever?"

In these extracts is painted the actual manners of the age of chivalry. The necessity of a perfect knight having a mistress, whom he loved *par amours*, the duty of dedicating his time to obey her commands, however capricious, and his strength to execute extravagant feats of valour, which might redound to her praise,—for all that was done for her sake, and under her auspices, was counted her merit, as the victories of their generals were ascribed to the Roman Emperors,—was not a whit less necessary to complete the character of a good knight than the Dame des Belles Cousines represented it.

It was the especial pride of each distinguished champion, to maintain, against all others, the superior worth, beauty, and accomplishments of his lady; to bear her picture from court to court, and support, with lance and sword, her superiority to all other dames, abroad or at home. To break a spear for the love of their ladies, was a challenge courteously given, and gently accepted, among all true followers of chivalry; and history and romance are alike filled with

the tilts and tournaments which took place upon this argument, which was ever ready and ever acceptable. Indeed, whatever the subject of the tournament had been, the lists were never closed until a solemn course had been made in honour of the ladies.

There were knights yet more adventurous, who sought to distinguish themselves by singular and uncommon feats of arms in honour of their mistresses; and such was usually the cause of the whimsical and extravagant vows of arms which we have subsequently to notice. To combat against extravagant odds, to fight amid the press of armed knights without some essential part of their armour, to do some deed of audacious valour in face of friend and foe, were the services by which the knights strove to recommend themselves, or which their mistresses (very justly so called) imposed on them as proofs of their affection.

On such occasions, the favoured knight, as he wore the colours and badge of the lady of his affections, usually exerted his ingenuity in inventing some device or cognisance which might express their affection, either openly as boasting of it in the eye of the world, or in such mysterious mode of indication as should only be understood by the beloved person, if circumstances did not permit an avowal of his passion. Among the earliest instances of the use of the English language at the court of the Norman monarch, is the distich painted in the shield of Edward III. under the figure of a white swan, being the device which that warlike monarch wore at a tourney at Windsor.

" Ha! Ha! the white swan,
By God his soul, I am thy man."

The choice of these devices was a very serious matter; and the usurpation of such as any knight had previously used and adopted, was often the foundation of a regular quarrel, of which many instances occur in Froissart and other writers.

The ladies, bound as they were in honour to requite the passion of their knights, were wont, on such occasions, to dignify them by the present of a scarf, ribbon, or glove, which was to be worn in the press of battle and tournament. These marks of favour they displayed on their helmets, and they were accounted the best incentives to deeds of valour. The custom appears to have prevailed in France to a late period, though polluted with the grossness so often mixed with the affected refinement and gallantry of that nation. In the attack made by the Duke of Buckingham upon the Isle of Rhé, favours were found on the persons of many of the French soldiers who fell at the skirmish on the landing; but for the manner in which they were disposed, we are compelled to refer to Howel and Wilson.

Sometimes the ladies, in conferring these tokens of their favour, clogged them with the most extravagant and severe conditions. But the lover had this advantage in such cases, that if he ventured to



encounter the hazard imposed, and chanced to survive it, he had, according to the fashion of the age, the right of exacting, from the lady, favours corresponding in importance. The annals of Chivalry abound with stories of cruel and cold fair ones, who subjected their lovers to extremes of danger, in hopes that they might get rid of their addresses, but were, upon their unexpected success, caught in their own snare, and, as ladies who would not have their name made the theme of reproach by every minstrel, compelled to recompense the deeds which their champion had achieved in their name. There are instances in which the lover used his right of reprisals with some rigour, as in the well-known *fabliau* of the three knights and the shift; in which a lady proposes to her three lovers, successively, the task of entering, unarmed, into the *mêlée* of a tournament, arrayed only in one of her shifts. The perilous proposal is declined by two of the knights and accepted by the third, who thrusts himself in the unprotected state required, into all the hazards of the tournament, sustains many wounds, and carries off the prize of the day. On the next day the husband of the lady (for she was married) was to give a superb banquet to the knights and nobles who had attended the tourney. The wounded victor sends the shift back to its owner, with his request that she would wear it over her rich dress on this solemn occasion, soiled and torn as it was, and stained all over with the blood of its late wearer. The lady did not hesitate to comply, declaring, that she regarded this shift, stained with the blood of her "fair friend, as more precious than if it were of the most costly materials." Jaques de Basin, the minstrel, who relates this curious tale, is at a loss to say whether the palm of true love should be given to the knight or to the lady on this remarkable occasion. The husband, he assures us, had the good sense to seem to perceive nothing uncommon in the singular vestment with which his lady was attired, and the rest of the good company highly admired her courageous requital of the knight's gallantry.

Sometimes the patience of the lover was worn out by the cold-hearted vanity which thrust him on such perilous enterprises. At the court of one of the German emperors, while some ladies and gallants of the court were looking into a den where two lions were confined, one of them purposely let her glove fall within the palisade which enclosed the animals, and commanded her lover, as a true knight, to fetch it out to her. He did not hesitate to obey, jumped over the enclosure; threw his mantle to the animals as they sprung at him; snatched up the glove, and regained the outside of the palisade. But when in safety, he proclaimed aloud, that what he had achieved was done for the sake of his own reputation, and not for that of a false lady, who could, for her sport and cold-blooded vanity, force a brave man on a duel so desperate. And, with the applause of all that were present, he renounced her love for ever.

This, however, was an uncommon circumstance. In general, the lady was supposed to have her lover's character as much at heart as her own, and to mean by pushing him upon enterprises of hazard, only to give him an opportunity of meriting her good graces, which she could not with honour confer upon one undistinguished by deeds of chivalry. An affecting instance is given by Gódscroft.

At the time when the Scotch were struggling to recover from the usurpation of Edward I., the castle of Douglas was repeatedly garrisoned by the English, and these garrisons were as frequently surprised, and cut to pieces, by the good Lord James of Douglas, who, lying in the mountainous wilds of Cairn-table, and favoured by the intelligence which he maintained among his vassals, took opportunity of the slightest relaxation of vigilance to surprise the fortress. At length, a fair dame of England announced to the numerous suitors who sought her hand, that she would confer it on the man who should keep the perilous castle of Douglas (so it was called) for a year and a day. The knight who undertook this dangerous task at her request, discharged his duty like a careful soldier for several months, and the lady, relenting at the prospect of his continued absence, sent a letter to recall him, declaring she held his probation as accomplished. In the meantime, however, he had received a defiance from Douglas, threatening, that let him use his utmost vigilance, he would recover from him his father's castle before Palm-Sunday. The English knight deemed that he could not in honour leave the castle till this day was past; and on the very eve of Palm-Sunday was surprised and slain with his lady's letter in his pocket, the perusal whereof greatly grieved the good Lord James of Douglas.

We are left much to our own conjectures on the appearance and manners of these haughty beauties, who were wooed with sword and lance, whose favours were bought at the expense of such dear and desperate perils, and who were worshipped, like heathen deities, with human sacrifices. The character of the ladies of the ages of chivalry was probably determined by that of the men, to whom it sometimes approached. Most of these heroines were educated to understand the treatment of wounds, not only of the heart, but of the sword; and in romance, at least, the quality of leech-craft (practised by the Lady Bountifuls of the last generation) was essential to the character of an accomplished princess. They sometimes trespassed on the province of their lovers, and actually took up arms. The Countess de Montfort in Bretagne is celebrated by Froissart for the gallantry with which she defended her castle, when besieged by the English; and the old Prior of Lochleven, in Scotland, is equally diffuse in the praise of Black Agnes, Countess of March, who, in the reign of Edward III., held out the castle of Dunbar against the English. She appeared on the battlements with a white handkerchief in her hands, and wiped the

walls in derision where they had been struck by stones from the English engines. When Montagu, Earl of Salisbury, brought up to the walls a military engine, like the Roman *testudo*, called a sow, she exclaimed in rhyme,

"Beware, Montagou,
For farrow shall thy sow."

A huge rock discharged from the battlements, dashed the sow to pieces, and the English soldiers who escaped from its ruins were called by the Countess in derision, Montagu's pigs.

The nature of the conferences between these high-minded heroines and their lovers was somewhat peculiar. Their delectations were in tales of warlike exploits, and in discoursing of hunting and hawking. But when these topics were exhausted, they found in metaphysical discussions of nice questions concerning the passion of love, an endless source of interesting disquisition. The idea and definition of a true and pure passion, illustrated by an hundred imaginary cases devised on purpose, were managed in the same manner in which the schoolmen of the day agitated their points of metaphysical theology. The Scotists and the Thomists, whose useless and nonsensical debates cumbered the world with so many volumes of absurd disquisition upon the most extravagant points of polemical divinity, saw their theological labours rivalled in the courts of love, where the most abstracted reasoning was employed in discussing subtle questions upon the exaggerated hopes, fears, doubts, and suspicions of lovers, the circumstances of whose supposed cases were often ridiculous, sometimes criminal, sometimes licentious, and almost always puerile and extravagant. In the meanwhile it is sufficient to state, that the discussions in the courts of love regarded such important and interesting questions, as, Whether his love be most meritorious who has formed his passion entirely on hearing, or his who has actually seen his mistress? with others of a tendency equally edifying.

Extremes of every kind border on each other; and as the devotion of the knights of chivalry degenerated into superstition, the Platonic refinements and subtleties of amorous passion which they professed, were sometimes compatible with very coarse and gross debauchery. We have seen that they derived from the Gothic tribes that high and reverential devotion to the female sex, which forms the strongest tint in the manners of chivalry. But with the simplicity of these ancient times they lost their innocence; and woman, though still worshipped with enthusiasm as in the German forests, did not continue to be (in all cases at least) the same pure object of regard. The marriage-tie ceased to be respected; and, as the youthful knights had seldom the means or inclination to encumber themselves with wives and families, their lady-love was often chosen among the married ladies of the court. It is true, that such a connexion was supposed to be consistent

with all respect and honour, and was regarded by the world, and sometimes by the husband, as a high strain of Platonic sentiment, through which the character of its object in no respect suffered. But nature vindicated herself for the violence offered to her; and while the metaphysical students and pleaders in the courts of love professed to aspire but to the lip or hand of their ladies, and to make a merit of renouncing all farther intrusion on their bounties, they privately indulged themselves in loves which had very little either of delicacy or sentiment. In the romance of the *Petit Jehan de Saintre*, that self-same Lady des Belles Cousines, who lectures so learnedly upon the seven mortal sins, not only confers on her deserving lover "le don d'amoureux merci," but enters into a very unworthy and disgraceful intrigue with a stout broad-shouldered abbot, into which no sentiment whatever can be supposed to enter. The romance of *Tirante the White*, praised by Cervantes as a faithful picture of the knights and ladies of his age, seems to have been written in an actual brothel, and, contrasted with others, may lead us to suspect that their purity is that of romance, its profligacy that of reality. This license was greatly increased by the Crusades, from which the survivors of these wild expeditions brought back the corrupted morals of the East, to avenge the injuries they had inflicted on its inhabitants. Joinville has informed us of the complaints which Saint Louis made to him in confidence of the debaucheries practised in his own royal tent, by his attendants, in this holy expedition. And the ignominious punishment to which he subjected a knight, detected in such excesses, shows what severe remedies he judged necessary to stem the increase of libertinism.

Indeed, the gross license which was practised during the middle ages, may be well estimated by the vulgar and obscene language that was currently used in tales and fictions addressed to the young and noble of both sexes. In the romance of the *Round Table*, as Ascham sternly states, little was to be learned but examples of homicide and adultery, although he had himself seen it admitted to the antechamber of princes, when it was held a crime to be possessed of the Word of God. In the Romance of *Amadis de Gaul*, and many others, the heroines, without censure or imputation, confer on their lovers the rights of a husband before the ceremony of the church gave them a title to the name. These are serious narrations, in which decorum, at least, is rarely violated. But the comic tales are of a grosser cast.

The *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer contain many narratives, of which, not only the diction, but the whole turn of the narrative, is extremely gross. Yet it does not seem to have occurred to the author, a man of rank and fashion, that they were improper to be recited, either in the presence of the prioress or her votaries, or in that of the noble knight who

—of his port was meek as is a maid,
And never yet no villany he said,



And he makes but a light apology for including the disasters of the *Millar of Trompington*, or of *Absalom the Gentle Clerk*, in the same series of narrations with the *Knight's Tale*. Many of Bandello's most profligate novels are expressly dedicated to females of rank and consideration. And, to conclude, the *Fabliaux*, published by Barbazan and Le Grand, are frequently as revolting, from their naked grossness, as interesting from the lively pictures which they present of life and manners. Yet these were the chosen literary pastimes of the fair and the gay, during the times of chivalry, listened to, we cannot but suppose, with an interest considerably superior to that exhibited by the yawning audience who heard the theses of the courts of love attacked and supported in logical form, and with metaphysical subtlety.

Should the manners of the times appear inconsistent in these respects which we have noticed, we must remember that we are ourselves variable and inconsistent animals, and that, perhaps, the surest mode of introducing and encouraging any particular vice, is to rank the corresponding virtue at a pitch unnatural in itself, and beyond the ordinary attainment of humanity. The vows of celibacy introduced profligacy among the Catholic clergy, as the high-flown and overstrained Platonism of the professors of chivalry favoured the increase of license and debauchery.

After the love of God and of his lady, the Preux Chevalier was to be guided by that of glory and renown. He was bound by his vow to seek out adventures of risk and peril, and never to abstain from the quest which he might undertake, for any unexpected odds of opposition which he might encounter. It was not indeed the sober and regulated exercise of valour, but its fanaticism, which the genius of chivalry demanded of its followers. Enterprises the most extravagant in conception, the most difficult in execution, the most useless when achieved, were those by which an adventurous knight chose to distinguish himself. There were solemn occasions also, on which these displays of chivalrous enthusiasm were specially expected and called for. It is only sufficient to name the tournaments, single combats, and solemn banquets, at which vows of chivalry were usually formed and proclaimed.

The tournaments were uniformly performed and frequented by the choicest and noblest youth in Europe, until the fatal accident of Henry II., after which they fell gradually into disuse. It was in vain that, from the various accidents to which they gave rise, these dangerous amusements were prohibited by the heads of the Christian church. The Popes, infallible as they were deemed, might direct, but could not curb, the military spirit of chivalry; they could excite crusades, but they could not abolish tournaments. Their laws, customs, and regulations, will fall properly under a separate article. It is here sufficient to observe that these military games were of two kinds. In the most ancient, mean-

ing "nothing in hate, but all in honour," the adventurous knights fought with sharp swords and lances, as in the day of battle. Even then, however, the number of blows was usually regulated, or, in case of a general combat, some rules were laid down to prevent too much slaughter. The regulations of Duke Theseus for the tournament in Athens, as narrated by Chaucer in the *Knight's Tale*, may give a good example of these restrictions. When the combatants fought on foot, it was prohibited to strike otherwise than at the head or body; the number of strokes to be dealt with the sword and battle-axe were carefully numbered and limited, as well as the careers to be run with the lance. In these circumstances alone, the combats at *outrance*, as they were called, differed from encounters in actual war.

In process of time, the dangers of the solemn justs held under the authority of princes, were modified by the introduction of arms of courtesy, as they were termed; lances, namely, without heads, and with round braces of wood at the extremity called *rockets*, and swords without points, and with blunted edges. But the risk continued great, from bruises, falls, and the closeness of the defensive armour of the times, in which the wearers were often smothered. The weapons at *outrance* were afterwards chiefly used when knights of different and hostile countries engaged by appointment, or when some adventurous gallants took upon them the execution of an enterprise of arms (*pas d'armes*), in which they, as challengers, undertook, for a certain time, and under certain conditions, to support the honour of their country, or their mistress, against all comers. These enterprises often ended fatally, but the knights who undertook them were received in the foreign countries which they visited in accomplishment of their challenge, with the highest deference and honour: their arrival was considered as affording a subject of sport and jubilee to all ranks; and when any mischance befell them, such as that of De Lindsay, who, in a tournament at Berwick, had his helmet nailed to his skull, by the truncheon of a lance which penetrated both, and died, after devoutly confessing himself, in the casque from which they could not disengage him, the knights who were spectators prayed that God would vouchsafe them in his mercy a death so fair and so honourable. Stories of such challenges, with the minute details of the events of the combat, form frequent features in the histories of the age.

The contests of the tournament and the PAS D'ARMES were undertaken merely in sport, and for thirst of honour. But the laws of the period afforded the adventurous knight other and more serious combats, in which he might exercise his valour. The custom of trying all doubtful cases by the body of a man, or, as it was otherwise expressed, by the judgment of God—in plain words, by referring the decision to the issue of a duel, prevailed universally among the Gothic tribes, from the highest antiquity. A *salvo* was devised, for the obvious absurdity

of calling upon the weak to encounter the strong, a churchman to oppose a soldier, or age to meet in the lists with activity and youth. It was held that either party might appear personally, or by his champion. This sage regulation gave exercise for the valour of the knights, who were bound by their oaths to maintain the cause of those who had no other protector. And, indeed, there is good reason to think, that the inconveniences and injustice of a law so absurd in itself as that of judicial combat, were evaded and mitigated by the institutions of chivalry, since among the number of knights who were eagerly hunting after opportunities of military distinction, a party incapable of supporting his own cause by combat could have little difficulty in finding a formidable substitute; so that no one, however bold and confident, could prosecute an unjust cause to the uttermost, without the risk of encountering some champion of the innocent party, from among the number of hardy knights who traversed every country seeking ostensible cause of battle.

Besides these formal combats, it was usual for the adventurous knight to display his courage by stationing himself at some pass in a forest, on a bridge, or elsewhere, compelling all passengers to avouch the superiority of his own valour, and the beauty of his mistress, or otherwise to engage with him in single combat. When Alexius Comnenus received the homage of the crusaders, seated upon his throne, previous to their crossing the Hellespont, during the first crusade, a French baron seated himself by the side of the Emperor of the East. He was reproved by Baldwin, and answered in his native language, "What ill-taught clown is this, who dares to keep his seat when the flower of the European nobility are standing around him!" The Emperor, dissembling his indignation, desired to know the birth and condition of the audacious Frank. "I am," replied the baron, "of the noblest race of France. For the rest, I only know that there is near my castle a spot where four roads meet, and near it a church where men, desirous of single combat, spend their time in prayer till some one shall accept their challenge. Often have I frequented that chapel, but never met I one who durst accept my defiance." Thus the Bridge of Rodomont, in the Orlando Furioso, and the valiant defiance which the Knight of La Mancha hurled against the merchants of Toledo, who were bound to the fairs of Murcia, were neither fictions of Ariosto nor Cervantes, but had their prototypes in real story. The chivalrous custom of defying all and sundry to mortal combat, subsisted in the Borders under the days of Queen Elizabeth, when the worthy Bernard Gilpin found in his church of Houghton le Spring a glove hung over the altar, which he was informed indicated a challenge to all who should take it down. The remnants of the judicial combats, and the enterprises of arms, may be found in the duels of the present day. In former times they still more resembled each other; for, in the seven-

teenth century, not only the seconds on each side regularly engaged, but it was usual to have more seconds, even to the number of five or six ; a custom pleasantly ridiculed by Lord Chesterfield, in one of the papers of *The World*. It is obvious that a usage, at once so ridiculous, and so detrimental to the peace and happiness of society, must give way, in proportion to the progress of common sense. The custom is in general upon the wane, even as far as respects single combat between men who have actually given or taken offence at each other. The general rules of good-breeding prevent causes of such disagreement from arising in the intercourse of society, and the forward duellist, who is solicitous in seeking them out, is generally accounted a vulgar and ferocious, as well as a dangerous character. At the same time, the habits derived from the days of chivalry still retain a striking effect on our manners, and have fully established a graceful as well as useful punctilio, which tends on the whole to the improvement of society. Every man enters the world under the impression, that neither his strength, his wealth, his station, or his wit, will excuse him from answering, at the risk of his life, any unbecoming encroachment on the civility due to the weakest, the poorest, the least important, or the most modest member of the society in which he mingles. All, too, in the rank and station of gentlemen, are forcibly called upon to remember, that they must resent the imputation of a voluntary falsehood as the most gross injury ; and that the rights of the weaker sex demand protection from every one who would hold a good character in society. In short, from the wild and overstrained courtesies of chivalry has been derived our present system of manners. It is not certainly faultless, and it is guarded by penalties which we must often regret as disproportionably severe. Yet it has a grace and dignity unknown to classic times, when women were slaves, and men coarse and vulgar, or overbearing and brutal, as suited their own humour, without respect to that of the rest of their society.

II. Such being the tone and spirit of chivalry, derived from love, devotion, and valour,—we have next to notice the special forms and laws of the order, which will be found to correspond in every respect to the spirit which they were designed to foster.

The education of the future knight began at an early period. The care of the mother, after the first years of early youth were past, was deemed too tender, and the indulgences of the paternal roof too effeminate, for the future aspirant to the honours of chivalry. “Do you not bless God,” said the Lady Mabel to her husband, the noble Duke Guerin of Montglaiave, as on a solemn feast they looked on their four hopeful sons, “do you not bless God that has given you such a promising issue?”—“Dame,” replied Guerin, in the true spirit of the age, “so help me God and Saint Martin ! nothing can do me greater despite than to look on these four great lurdanes, who, arrived at such

an age, yet do nothing but eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and spend their time in idle amusement." To counteract these habits of indulgence, the first step to the order of knighthood was the degree of PAGE.

The young and noble stripling, generally about his twelfth year, was transferred from his father's house to that of some baron or gallant knight, sedulously chosen by the anxious parent as that which had the best reputation for good order and discipline. The children of the first nobles and high crown-vassals were educated by the royal court. And, however the reins of discipline might be in particular cases relaxed, or become corrupted in latter days, the theory was uniformly excellent. The youth who was to learn modesty, obedience, and address in arms and horsemanship, was daily exercised in the use of his weapons, beginning with such as were suited to his strength. He was instructed how to manage a horse with grace and dexterity; how to use the bow and the sword; how to manage the lance, an art which was taught by making him ride a career against a wooden figure holding a buckler called a quintaine. This quintaine turned on an axis; and as there was a wooden sword in the other hand of the supposed opponent, the young cavalier, if he did not manage his horse and weapon with address, was liable to receive a blow when the shock of his charge made the quintaine spin round.

Besides these exercises, the noble youth was required to do the work which, in some respects, belonged to a menial; but not as a menial. He attended his lord during the chase, the rules of which, as an image of war, and as held the principal occupation of a gentleman during peace, were carefully inculcated. He was taught the principal blasts or notes of *venerie*, to be sounded when the hounds were uncoupled, when the prey was on foot, when he was brought to bay, and when he fell. This art did not tend solely to amusement. "The gentle damo-sel," to use the language of the times, learned to bear the fatigue, the hunger, and thirst, which huntsmen are exposed to. By the necessity of encountering and despatching a stag, a boar, or a wolf, at bay, he learned promptitude and courage in the use of his weapons. The accuracy with which he was required to mark the tracks of the hunted animal's course gave him habits of attention and reflection. In the days and nights spent in the chase, amid wide and pathless forests, he acquired the art, so necessary to a soldier, of remarking and studying the face of the country. When benighted, he was taught to steer his course by the stars, if they were visible; if not, to make his couch with patience on the withered leaves, or in a tree. Had he lost his way by daytime, he distinguished the points of the compass by remarking which side of the trees were most covered with moss, and from which they threw their branches most freely, circumstances which, compared with the known course of the prevailing wind, afforded him the necessary information.

The ceremonial of the chase was to be acquired, as well as its arts. To BRITTLE or BREAK the deer (in French, *faire la curée*), in plain terms, to stay and disembowel the stag, a matter in which much precision was required, and the rules of which were ascribed to the celebrated Sir Tristrem of Lionesse, was an indispensable requisite of the page's education. Nor did his concern with the venison end here; he placed it on the table, waited during the banquet, and carved the ponderous dishes, when required or permitted to do so. Much grace and delicacy, it was supposed, might be displayed on these occasions; and, in one romance, we read of the high birth and breeding of a page being ascertained, by his scrupulously declining to use a towel to wipe his hands, when washed before he began to carve, and contented himself with waving them in the air till they dried of themselves. It is, perhaps, difficult to estimate the force of this delicacy, unless by supposing that he had not a towel or napkin appropriated to his own separate use.

Amidst these various instructions, the page was often required to wait upon the ladies, rather as attending a sort of superior beings, to whom adoration and obsequious service were due, than as ministering to the convenience of human creatures like himself. The most modest demeanour, the most profound respect, was to be observed in the presence of these fair idols. Thus the veneration due to the female character was taught to the acolyte of chivalry, by his being placed so near female beauty, yet prohibited the familiarity which might discover female weakness. Love frequently mingled with this early devotion, and the connexion betwixt some lady of distinction and her gallant knight, is often, in romantic fiction, supposed to have originated from such early affection. In a romance called *The Golden Thread* (of which we have only seen a modern edition in German, but which has many features of originality,) when the daughter of the Count bestows her annual gifts on her father's household, she gives the page Leofried, in derision, a single thread of gold tissue. To show the value which he places upon the most minute memorial, coming from such a hand, the youth opens a wound in his bosom, and deposits the precious thread in the neighbourhood of his heart. The Dame des Belles Cousines, whom we have already mentioned, was assuredly not the only lady of high rank who was tempted to give a handsome young page the benefit of her experience in completing his education. This led the way to abuse; and the custom of breeding up youths as pages in the houses of the great, although it survived the decay of chivalry, was often rather the introduction to indolence, mischief, and debauchery, than to useful knowledge and the practice of arms. The proper purposes of this preliminary part of chivalrous education, are well given by one of the characters in Ben Jonson's *New Inn*, and he is answered by another, who alleges, with satire resembling that of Juvenal,

the modern corruptions of the order of pages. Lord Lovel has requested mine Host to give him his son for a page. The Host answers, by declaring, he would rather hang his child with his own hand,

"Than damn him to that desperate course of life.
Lovel. Call you that desperate, which, by a line
 Of institution from our ancestors,
 Hath been derived down to us, and received
 In a succession, for the noblest way
 Of breeding up our youth in letters, arms,
 Fair mien, discourses, civil exercises,
 And all the blazon of a gentleman?
 Where can he learn to vault, to ride, to fence,
 To mar his body gracefully, to speak
 His language purer, or to turn his mind
 Or manners more to the harmony of nature
 Than in those nurseries of nobility?
Host. Ay, that was when the nursery's self was noble,
 And only virtue made it, not the market."

And he replies, by enumerating instances of the decay of honour among the nobles, and of the debauchery of their household pages. In La Noue's *Political and Military Discourses*, is a similar complaint of the hazards to which the morals of young gentlemen were exposed while acting in this domestic capacity. Nevertheless, the custom of having young gentlemen thus bred, continued, in a certain degree, down to the last century, although those destined to such employments became, by degrees, of a lower quality. In some few instances, the institution was maintained in its purity, and the page, when leaving the family in which he was educated, usually obtained a commission. The last instance we know, was that of a gentleman bred a page in the family of the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, who died during the present reign, a general-officer in his Majesty's service.

When advancing age and experience in the use of arms had qualified the page for the hardships and dangers of actual war, he was removed, from the lowest to the second gradation of chivalry, and became an *Escuyer*, Esquire, or SQUIRE. The derivation of this phrase has been much contested. It has been generally supposed to be derived from its becoming the official duty of the esquire to carry the shield (*Escu*) of the knight his master, until he was about to engage the enemy. Others have fetched the epithet (more remotely certainly) from *Scuria*, a stable, the charger of the knight being under the especial care of the squire. Others, again, ascribe the derivation of the word to the right which the squire himself had to carry a shield, and to blazon it with armorial bearings. This, in later times, became almost the exclusive meaning attached to the appellative esquire; and, accordingly, if the phrase now means any thing, it means a gentleman having a right to carry arms. There is reason, however, to think this is a secondary meaning of the word, for we do not find the word *Escuyer*, applied as a title of rank, until so late as the Ordonnance of Blois, in 1579.

The candidate for the honours of chivalry, now an immediate attendant on the knight or nobleman, was withdrawn from the private apartments of the ladies, and only saw them upon occasions of stated ceremony. In great establishments, there were squires of different ranks, and destined for different services; but we shall confine ourselves to those general duties which properly belonged to the office. The squire assisted his master in the offices, at once of a modern valet-de-chambre and groom—he attended to dress and to undress him, trained his horses to the menage, and kept his arms bright and burnished. He did the honours of the household to the strangers who visited it, and the reputation of the prince or great lord whom he served, was much exalted by the manner in which these courteous offices were discharged. In the words of Chaucer, describing the character of the squire,

"Curteis he was, lowly and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table."

The squire was also expected to perfect himself in the accomplishments of the period, and not only to be a master of the ceremonial of the feast, but to be capable of enlivening it by his powers of conversation. He was expected to understand chess, draughts, and other domestic games. Poetry and music, if he had any turn for these beautiful arts, and whatever other accomplishments could improve the mind or the person, were accounted to grace his station. And, accordingly, Chaucer's squire, besides that he was "singing or fluting all the day,"

—"Could songs make, and well indite,
Joust, and eke dance, and well pourtray and write."

Unquestionably, few possessed all these attributes; but the poet, with his usual precision and vivacity, has given us the picture of a perfect esquire.

To understand the squire's mode of life more particularly, it is necessary to consider that which was led in the courts and castles of the middle ages. Froissart has given us a very striking account of the mode of house-keeping in the family of Gaston, Earl of Foix, a prince whose court was considered as a first-rate nursery for the noble youth; and, from his lively description, we may, in some measure, conceive the mode in which the esquires spent their time. Froissart abode in his house above twelve weeks, much recommended to the favourable notice of the Earl, by his having brought with him a book containing all the songs, ballads, and virilays, which Wencislaus of Bohemia, the gentle Duke of Brabant, had made, and the historian himself had compiled or transcribed. "Every night, after supper," says Froissart, "I read thereon to him, and while I read there was none durst speak any thing to interrupt me, so much did the Earl delight in listening." The quotation necessary to describe the Earl of Foix, and the economy of

his household, must necessarily be a long one, but it is a picture, by the hand of an inimitable artist, of a school of chivalry when chivalry was at its highest pitch, and we are unwilling to destroy the likeness by abridging it.

"This erle Gascone of Foix, with whom I was, at that tyme, he was of a fyftie yere of age and nyne; and, I say, I have in my tyme sene many knights, kynges, princes, and others, but I neuer saw none like him of personage, nor of so fayre forme, nor so well made; his vysage fayre, sanguyne, and smyling, his eyen gray and amorous, wher as he lyst to set his regarde; in euery thing he was so parfite that he can not be praised to moche; he loued that ought to be beloued, and hated that ought to be hated: he was a wyse knyght, of highe enterprise, and of good counsayle; he neuer had myscreant with hym; he sayd many orisons every day, a nocturn of the psalter, matyns of our Lady, of the Holy Goost, and of the crosse, and dirigé euery day; he gaue fyue florins, in small monies, at his gate to poore folkes for the loue of God; he was large and courtesse in gyftes; he could ryght well take where it parteyned to hym, and to delyuer agayne wher as he ought; he loued houndes of all beestes, wynter and somer he loued huntyng: ne neuer loued folly, outrage, nor foly larges; euery moneth he wolde knowe what he spende: he tooke in his countre to réceyue his reuenwes, and to serue him, notable persons, that is to saye, xii. recyours, and euer fro ii. monethes to two monethes, two of them shulde serue for his receyte; for, at the two monethes ende, he wolde change and put other two into that offyce; and one that he trusted best shulde be his comptroller, and to hym all other shulde accopt, and the comptroller shulde accopt to hym by rolles and bokes written, and the comptes to remayne still with therle; he had certeyne cofers in his chambre, out of the whiche oftetyms he wolde take money to give to lordes, knyhtes, and squyers, such as came to hym, for none shulde departe from him without some gift, and yet dayly he multiplyed his treasure, to resyst the adueētures and fortunes that he douēted; he was of good and easy acquayntance with every man, and amorously wold speke to theē; he was short in counsayle, and answers; he had four secretaries, and, at his rising, they must ever be redy at his hande, without any callynge; and whan any letter were delyuered him, and that he had reed it, than he wolde calle them to write agayne, or els for some other thyng. In this estate therle of Foix lyued. And at mydnight, whan he came out of his chambre into the hall to supper, he had ever before hym xii. torches brennyng, borne by xii. variettes standyng before his table all supper; they gaue a gret light, and the hall ever full of knyhtes and squyers, and many other tables dressed to suppe who wolde; ther was none should speke to hym at his table; but if he were called; his meate was lightlye wylde foule, the legges and wynges alonely, and in the day he dyd but lytell eate and driike;

he had great pleasure in armony of instrumeētes ; he coude do it right well hymselfe ; he wold have songes song before him, he wolde gladlye se conseytes and fantasies at his table. And or I came to his court, I had ben in many courtes of kynges, dukes, princes, erles, and great ladyes, but I was neuer in none y so well liked me, nor ther was none more reioysed in dedes of armes, than the erle dyde : ther was sene in his hall, chaābre, and court, knightes and squyers of honour going up and downe, and talking of armes and amours ; all honour ther was found, all maner of tidynges of every realme and countre ther might be herde, for out of every countree there was resort, for the valy-antnesse of this erle.”*

While the courage of the young aspirant to the honours of knight-hood was animated, and his emulation excited, by the society in which he was placed, and the conversation to which he listened,—while every thing was done which the times admitted to refine his manners, and, in a certain degree, to cultivate his understanding ; the personal exercises to which he had been trained, while a page, were now to be pursued with increasing assiduity, proportioned to the increase of his strength. “He was taught,” says a historian, speaking of Boucicaut, while a squire, “to spring upon a horse, while armed at all points ; to exercise himself in running, to strike for a length of time with the axe or club ; to dance and throw somersets, entirely armed, excepting the helmet ; to mount on horseback behind one of his comrades, by barely laying his hands on his sleeve ; to raise himself betwixt two partition walls to any height, by placing his back against the one, and his knees and hands against the other ; to mount a ladder, placed against a tower, upon the reverse or under side, solely by the aid of his hands, and without touching the rounds with his feet ; to throw the javelin, to pitch the bar,” to do all, in short, which could exercise the body to feats of strength and agility, in order to qualify him for the exploits of war. For this purpose also, the esquires had their tourneys, separate and distinct from those of the knights. They were usually solemnized on the eve of the more formal and splendid tournaments, in which the knights themselves displayed their valour ; and lighter weapons than those of the knights, though some of the same kind, were employed by the esquires. But, as we shall presently notice, the most distinguished among the esquires were (notwithstanding the high authority of the knight of La Mancha to the contrary) frequently admitted to the honours and dangers of the more solemn encounter.

In actual war the page was not expected to render much service, but that of the squire was important and indispensable. Upon a march he bore the helmet and shield of the knight and led his horse of battle, a tall heavy animal fit to bear the weight of a man in armour, but which was led in hand in marching, while the knight rode an ambling

* Froissart's *Chronicles*, translated by Lord Berners.

hackney. The squire was also qualified to perform the part of an armourer, not only lacing his master's helmet and buckling his cuirass, but also closing with a hammer the rivets by which the various pieces were united to each other. This was a point of the utmost consequence; and many instances occur of mischances happening to celebrated warriors when the duty was negligently performed. In the actual shock of battle, the esquire attended closely on the banner of his master, or on his person if he were only a knight bachelor, kept pace with him during the MELEE, and was at hand to remount him when his steed was slain, or relieve him when oppressed by numbers. If the knight made prisoners they were the charge of the esquire; if the esquire himself fortuneed to make one, the ransom belonged to his master.

On the other hand, the knights who received these important services from their esquires, were expected to display towards them that courteous liberality which made so distinguished a point of the chivalrous character. Lord Audley led the van of the Black Prince's army at the battle of Poitiers, attended by four squires who had promised not to fail him. They distinguished themselves in the front of that bloody day, leaving such as they overcame to be made prisoners by others, and ever pressing forwards where resistance was offered. Thus they fought in the chief of the battle until Lord James Audley was sorely wounded, and his breath failed him. At the last, when the battle was gained, the four faithful esquires bore him out of the press, disarmed him, and staunch and dressed his wounds as they could. As the Black Prince called for the man to whom the victory was in some measure owing, Lord Audley was borne before him in a litter, when the Prince, after having awarded to him the praise and renown above all others who fought on that day, bestowed on him five hundred marks of yearly revenue, to be assigned out of his heritage in England. Lord Audley accepted of the gift with due demonstration of gratitude; but no sooner was he brought to his lodging than he called before him the four esquires by whom he had been so gallantly seconded, and the nobles of his lineage, and informed his kinsmen,—

“ ‘Sirs, it hath pleased my Lord the Prince to bestow on me five hundred marks of heritage of which I am unworthy, for I have done him but small service. Behold, Sirs, these four squires, which have always served me truly, and specially this day; the honour that I have is by their valour. Therefore I resign to them and their heirs for ever, in like manner as it was given to me, the noble gift which the Prince hath assigned me.’ The lords beheld each other, and agreed it was a proof of great chivalry to bestow so royal a gift, and gladly undertook to bear witness to the transfer. When Edward heard these tidings, he sent for Lord Audley, and desired to know why he had bestowed on others the gift he had assigned him, and whether it had not been

acceptable to him : ' Sir,' said Lord Audley, ' these four squires have followed me well and truly in several severe actions, and at this battle they served me so well; that had they done nothing else, I had been bound to reward them. I am myself but a single man, but, by aid of their united strength and valour, I was enabled to execute the vow which I had made, to give the onset in the first battle in which the King of England or his sons should be present, and had it not been for them, I must have been left dead on the field. This is the reason I have transferred your Highness's bounty, as to those by whom it was best deserved.' "

The Black Prince not only approved of and confirmed Lord Audley's grant, but conferred upon him, not to be outdone in generosity, a yearly revenue of six hundred marks more, for his own use.* The name of the esquires, who thus distinguished themselves, and experienced such liberality at the hands of their leader, were Delves of Doddington, Dutton of Dutton, Fowlshurst of Crewe, and Hawkeston of Wreyneshill, all Cheshire families. This memorable instance may suffice to show the extent of gratitude which the knights entertained for the faithful service of their squires. But it also leads us to consider some other circumstances relating to the order of esquire.

Although, in its primitive and proper sense, the state of esquire was merely preparatory to that of knighthood, yet it is certain that many men of birth and property rested content with attaining that first step; and though greatly distinguished by their feats of arms, never rose, nor apparently sought to rise, above the rank which it conferred. It does not appear that any of the esquires of Lord Audley were knighted after the battle of Poitiers, although there can be no doubt that their rank, as well as their exploits, entitled them to expect that honour. The truth seems to be, that it may frequently have been more convenient, and scarcely less honourable, to remain in the unenvied and unpretending rank of esquire, than to aspire to that of knighthood, without a considerable fortune to supply the expenses of that dignity. No doubt, in theory, the simplest knight bachelor was a companion, and in some degree equal, with princes. But, in truth, we shall presently see, that, where unsupported by some sort of income to procure suitable equipment and retainers, that dignity was sometimes exposed to ridicule. Many gallant gentlemen, therefore, remained esquires, either attached to the service of some prince or eminent nobleman, or frequently in a state of absolute independence, bringing their own vassals to the field, whom, in such cases, they were entitled to muster under a *Penoncele*, or small triangular streamer, somewhat like the naval pendant of the present day. The reader of history is not, therefore, to suppose, that, where he meets with an esquire of distinguished name, he is therefore, necessarily, to consider him as a youthful candidate for

* Froissart. Barne's *History of Edward III.*

the honour of knighthood, and attending upon some knight or noble. This is, indeed, the primitive, but not the uniform meaning of the title. So many men of rank and gallantry appear to have remained esquires, that, by degrees, many of the leading distinctions between them and the knights were relaxed or abandoned. In Froissart's *Chronicles*, we find that esquires frequently led independent bodies of men, and, as we have before hinted, mingled with the knights in the games of Chivalry; the difference chiefly consisting in title, precedence; the shape of the flag under which they arrayed their followers; and the fashion of their armour. The esquires were permitted to bear a shield, emblazoned, as we have already seen, with armorial bearings: There seems to have been some difference in the shape of the helmet; and the French esquire was not permitted to wear the complete hauberk, but only the shirt of mail, without hood or sleeves. But the principal distinction between the independent esquire (terming him such who was attached to no knight's service) and the knight, was the spurs, which the esquire might wear of silver, but by no means gilded.

To return to the esquires, most properly so termed, their dress was, during their period of probation, simple and modest, and ought regularly to have been made of brown, or some other uniform and simple colour. This was not, however, essential. The garment of Chaucer's squire was embroidered like a meadow. The petit Jehan de Saintré was supplied with money by his mistress to purchase a silken doublet and embroidered hose. There is also a very diverting account, in the *Memoirs of Bertrand de Guesclin*, of the manner in which he prevailed on his uncle, a covetous old churchman, to assign him money for his equipment on some occasion of splendour. We may therefore hold, that the sumptuary laws of squirehood were not particularly attended to, or strictly enforced:

A youth usually ceased to be a page at fourteen, or a little earlier, and could not regularly receive the honour of knighthood until he was one-and-twenty. But, if their distinguished valour anticipated their years, the period of probation was shortened. Princes of the blood-royal, also, and other persons of very high eminence, had this term abridged, and sometimes so much so, as to throw a ridicule upon the order of knighthood, by admitting within "the temple of honour," as it was the fashion of the times to call it, children, who could neither understand nor discharge the duties of the office to which they were thus prematurely called.

The third and highest rank of chivalry was that of Knighthood. In considering this last dignity, we shall first inquire, how it was conferred; secondly, the general privileges and duties of the order; thirdly, the peculiar ranks into which it was finally divided, and the difference betwixt them.

Knighthood was, in its origin, an order of a republican, or at least

an oligarchic nature ; arising, as has been shown, from the customs of the free tribes of Germany, and, in its essence, not requiring the sanction of a monarch. On the contrary, each knight could confer the order of knighthood upon whomsoever preparatory noviciate and probation had fitted to receive it. The highest potentates sought the *accolade*, or stroke which conferred the honour, at the hands of the worthiest knight whose achievements had dignified the period. Thus Francis I. requested the celebrated Bayard, the *Good Knight without reproach or fear*, to make him ; an honour which Bayard valued so highly, that, on sheathing his sword, he vowed never more to use that blade, except against Turks, Moors, and Saracens. The same principle was carried to extravagance in a romance, where the hero is knighted by the hand of Sir Lancelot of the Lake, when dead. A sword was put into the hand of the skeleton, which was so guided as to let it drop on the neck of the aspirant. In the time of Francis I. it had already become customary to desire this honour at the hands of greatness rather than valour, so that the King's request was considered as an appeal to the first principles of chivalry. In theory, however, the power of creating knights was supposed to be inherent in every one who had reached that dignity. But it was natural that the soldier should desire to receive the highest military honour from the general under whose eye he was to combat, or from the prince or noble at whose court he passed as page and squire through the gradations of his noviciate. It was equally desirable, on the other hand, that the prince or noble should desire to be the immediate source of a privilege so important. And thus, though no positive regulation took place on the subject, ambition on the part of the aspirant, and pride and policy on that of the sovereign princes and nobles of high rank, gradually limited to the latter the power of conferring knighthood, or drew at least an unfavourable distinction between the knights dubbed by private individuals, and those who, with more state and solemnity, received the honoured title at the hand of one of high rank. Indeed, the change which took place respecting the character and consequences of the ceremony, naturally led to a limitation in the right of conferring it. While the order of knighthood merely implied a right to wear arms of a certain description, and to bear a certain title, there could be little harm in intrusting, to any one who had already received the honour, the power of conferring it on others. But when this highest order of chivalry conferred not only personal dignity, but the right of assembling under the banner, or pennon, a certain number of soldiers ; when knighthood implied not merely personal privileges, but military rank, it was natural that sovereigns should use every effort to concentrate the right of conferring such distinction in themselves, or their immediate delegates. And latterly it was held, that the rank of knight only conferred those privileges on such as were dubbed by sovereign princes.

The times and place usually chosen for the creation of knights, were favourable to the claim of the sovereigns to be the proper fountain of chivalry. Knights were usually made either on the eve of battle, or when the victory had been obtained ; or they were created during the pomp of some solemn warning or grand festival. In the former case, the right of creation was naturally referred to the general or prince who led the host ; and, in the latter, to the sovereign of the court where the festival was held. The forms in these cases were very different.

When knights were made in the actual field of battle, little solemnity was observed, and the form was probably the same with which private individuals had, in earlier times, conferred the honour on each other. The novice, armed at all points, but without helmet, sword, and spurs, came before the prince or general, at whose hands he was to receive knighthood, and kneeled down, while two persons of distinction, who acted as his godfathers, and were supposed to become pledges for his being worthy of the honour to which he aspired, buckled on his gilded spurs, and belted him with his sword. He then received the accolade, a slight blow on the neck, with the flat of the sword, from the person who dubbed him, who, at the same time, pronounced a formula to this effect : " I dub thee knight, in the name of God and St. Michael (or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.) Be faithful, bold, and fortunate." The new-made knight had then only to take his place in the ranks of war, and endeavour to distinguish himself by his forward gallantry in the approaching action, when he was said to win his spurs. It is well known, that, at the battle of Cressy, Edward III. refused to send succours to the Black Prince, until he should hear that he was wounded or dismounted, being determined he should, on that memorable day, have full opportunity to *win his spurs*. It may be easily imagined, that on such occasions, the courage of the young knights was wound up to the highest pitch, and, as many were usually made at the same time, their gallantry could not fail to have influence on the fortune of the day. At the siege of Tholouse (1159,) Henry II. of England made thirty knights at once, one of whom was Malcolm IV. King of Scotland. Even on these occasions, the power of making knights was not understood to be limited to the commander-in-chief. At the fatal battle of Homildown, in 1401, Sir John Swinton, a warrior of distinguished talents, observing the slaughter made by the English archery, exhorted the Scots to rush on to a closer engagement. Adam Gordon, between whose family and that of Swinton a deadly feud existed, hearing this sage counsel, knelt down before Swinton, and prayed him to confer on him the honour of knighthood, which he desired to receive from the wisest and boldest knight in the host. Swinton conferred the order ; and they both rushed down upon the English host followed only by a few cavalry. If they had been supported, the attack might have turned the fate of the day. But none followed their

gallant example, and both champions fell. It need hardly be added, that the commander, whether a sovereign prince or not, equally exercised the privilege of conferring knighthood. In the old ballad of the battle of Otterburn, Douglas boasts, that since he had entered England, he had

“With brand dubb’d many a knight.”

But it was not in camps and armies alone that the honours of knight-hood were conferred. At the *Cour Plenière*, a high court, to which sovereigns summoned their crown vassals at the solemn festivals of the church, and the various occasions of solemnity which occurred in the royal family, from marriage, birth, baptism, and the like, the monarch was wont to confer on novices in chivalry its highest honour, and the ceremonies used on such investiture added to the dignity of the occasion. It was then that the full ritual was observed, which, on the eve of battle, was necessarily abridged or omitted. The candidates watched their arms all night in a church or chapel, and prepared for the honour to be conferred on them, by vigil, fast, and prayer. They were solemnly divested of the brown frock, which was the appropriate dress of the squire, and having been bathed, as a symbol of purification of heart, they were attired in the richer garb appropriate to knight-hood. They were then solemnly invested with the appropriate arms of a knight; and it was not unusual to call the attention of the novice to a mystical or allegorical explanation of each piece of armour as it was put on. These exhortations consisted in strange and extravagant parallels betwixt the temporal and spiritual state of welfare, in which the metaphor was hunted down in every possible shape. The under dress of the knight was a close jacket of chamois leather, over which was put the mail shirt, composed of rings of steel artificially fitted into each other, as is still the fashion in some parts of Asia. A suit of plate armour was put on over the mail shirt, and the legs and arms were defended in the same manner. Even this accumulation of defensive armour, was by some thought insufficient. In the combat of the Infantes of Carrion with the champions of the Cid, one of the former was yet more completely defended, and to little purpose.

“Onward into Ferrand’s breast, the lance’s point is driven
Full upon his breastplate, nothing would avail;
Two breastplates Ferrand wore, and a coat of mail,
The two are riven in sunder, the third stood him in stead,
The mail sunk in his breast, the mail and the spear head;
The blood burst from his mouth, and all men thought him dead.”*

The novice being accoutred in his knightly armour, but without helmet, sword, and spurs, a rich mantle was flung over him, and he was conducted in solemn procession to the church or chapel in which the

* See Translations from the Spanish metrical Romance on the subject of the Cid, appended to Mr. Southey’s Cid.

ceremony was to be performed, supported by his godfathers, and attended with as much pomp as circumstances admitted. High mass was then said, and the novice, advancing to the altar, received from the sovereign the accolade. The churchman present, of highest dignity, often belted on his sword, which, for that purpose, had been previously deposited on the altar, and the spurs were sometimes fastened on by ladies of quality. The oath of chivalry was lastly taken, to be loyal to God, the king, and the ladies. Such were the outlines of the ceremony, which, however, was varied according to circumstances. A king of Portugal knighted his son in presence of the dead body of the Marquis of Marialva, slain in that day's action, and impressively conjured the young prince to do his duty in life and death like the good knight who lay dead before him. Alms to the poor, largesses to the heralds and minstrels, a liberal gift to the church, were necessary accompaniments to the investiture of a person of rank. The new-made knight was conducted from the church with music and acclamations, and usually mounted his horse and executed some curvets in presence of the multitude, couching his lance, and brandishing it as if impatient to open his knightly career. It was at such times, also, that the most splendid tournaments were executed, it being expected that the young knights would there display the utmost efforts to distinguish themselves.

Such being the solemnities with which knighthood was imposed, it is no wonder that the power of conferring it should, in peace as well as in war, be almost confined to sovereign princes, or nobles who nearly equalled them in rank and independence. By degrees these restrictions were drawn more and more close; and at length it was held that none but a sovereign or a commander-in-chief, displaying the royal banner, and vested with plenary and vice-regal authority, could confer the degree of knighthood. Queen Elizabeth was particularly jealous of this part of her prerogative, and nothing more excited her displeasure and indignation against her favourite Essex, than the profuseness with which he distributed the honour at Cadiz, and afterwards in Ireland. These anecdotes, however, belong to the decay of chivalry.

The knight had several privileges of dignity and importance. He was associated into a rank wherein kings and princes were, in one sense, only his equals. He took precedence in war and in counsel, and was addressed by the respectful title of *Messire* in French, and *Sir* in English, and his wife by that of *Madame* and *Dame*. A knight was also, in point of military rank, qualified to command any body of men under a thousand. His own service was performed on horseback and in complete armour, of many various fashions, according to the taste of the warriors and the fashion of the age. Chaucer has enumerated some of these varieties:—

" With him ther wenten knights many on.
 Som wol ben armed in an habergeon,
 And in a brest plate, and in a gipon ;
 And som wol have a pair of plates large ;
 And som wol have a pruse shield, or a targe ;
 Som wol ben armed on his legge wele,
 And have an axe, and some a mace of stele.
 Ther n'is no newe guise, that it n'as old.
 Armed they weren, as I have you told,
 Everich after his opinion."

The weapons of offence, however, most appropriate to knighthood, were the lance and sword. They had frequently a battle-axe or mace at their saddle-bow, a formidable weapon even to men sheathed in iron like themselves. The knight had also a dagger which he used when at close quarters. It was called the dagger of mercy, probably because, when unsheathed, it behoved the antagonist to crave mercy or to die. The management of the lance and of the horse was the principal requisite of knighthood. To strike the foeman either on the helmet or full upon the breast with the point of the lance, and at full speed, was accounted perfect practice ; to miss him, or to break a lance across, *i. e.* athwart the body of the antagonist, without striking him with the point, was accounted an awkward failure ; to strike his horse, or to hurt his person under the girdle, was conceived a foul or felon action, and could only be excused by the hurry of a general encounter. When the knights, from the nature of the ground, or other circumstances, alighted to fight on foot, they used to cut some part from the length of their spears, in order to render them more manageable, like the pikes used by infantry. But their most formidable onset was when mounted and "in host." They seem then to have formed squadrons not unlike the present disposition of cavalry in the field—their squires forming the rear-rank, or performing the part of *serrefiles*. As the horses were trained in the tournaments and exercises to run upon each other without flinching, the shock of two such bodies of heavy-armed cavalry was dreadful, and the event usually decided the battle ; for, until the Swiss showed the superior steadiness which could be exhibited by infantry, all great actions were decided by the men-at-arms. The yeomanry of England, indeed, formed a singular exception ; and, from the dexterous use of the long-bow, to which they were trained from infancy, were capable of withstanding and destroying the mail-clad chivalry both of France and Scotland. Their shafts, according to the exaggerating eloquence of a monkish historian, Thomas of Walsingham, penetrated steel coats from side to side, transfixing helmets, and even splintered lances, and pierced through swords ! But, against every other pedestrian adversary, the knights, squires, and men-at-arms, had the most decided advantage, from their impenetrable armour, the strength of their horses, and the fury of their onset. To render success yet more certain, and attack less hazardous, the horse, on the safety of which

the rider so much depended, was armed *en-barbe*, as it was called, like himself. A masque made of iron covered the animal's face and ears; it had a breast-plate, and armour for the croupe. The strongest horses were selected for this service; they were generally stallions, and to ride a mare was reckoned base and unknighly.

To distinguish him in battle, as his face was hid by the helmet, the knight wore above his armour a surcoat, as it was called, like a herald's coat, on which his arms were emblazoned. Others had them painted on the shield, a small triangular buckler of light wood, covered with leather, and sometimes plated with steel, which, as best suited him, the knight could either wield on his left arm, or suffer to hang down from his neck, as an additional defence to his breast, when the left hand was required for the management of the horse. The shape of these shields is preserved, being that on which heraldic coats are most frequently blazoned. But it is something remarkable, that not one of those *heater** shields has been preserved in the Tower, or, so far as we know, in any English collection. The helmet was surmounted by a crest, which the knight adopted after his own fancy. There was deadly offence taken if one knight, without right, assumed the armorial bearings of another; and history is full of disputes on that head, some of which terminated fatally. The heralds were the persons appealed to on these occasions, when the dispute was carried on in peace, and hence flowed the science, as it was called, of Heraldry, with all its fantastic niceties. By degrees the crest and device became also hereditary, as well as the bearings on the shield. In addition to his armorial bearings, the knight distinguished himself in battle by shouting out his war-cry, which was echoed by his followers. It was usually the name of some favourite saint, united with that of his own family. If the knight had followers under his command, they re-echoed his war-cry, and rallied round his pennon or flag at the sound. The pennon differed from the penoncel, or triangular streamer which the squire was entitled to display, being double the breadth, and indented at the end like the tail of a swallow. It presented the appearance of two penoncels united at the end next the staff, a consideration which was not perhaps out of view in determining its shape. Of course the reader will understand that those knights only displayed a pennon who had retainers to support and defend it; the mounting this ensign being a matter of privilege, not of obligation.

Froissart's heart never fails to overflow when he describes the encounter of a body of men-at-arms, arrayed in the manner we have described; he dwells with enthusiasm on the leading circumstances. The waving of banners and pennons, the dashing of spurs into the sides of chargers, and their springing forward to battle: the glittering of armour, the glancing of plumes, the headlong shock and splintering of the lances, the swords flashing through the dust over the heads of

* So called because resembling in shape the heater of a smoothing iron

the combatants, the thunder of the horses' feet and the clash of armour, mingled with the war-cry of the combatants and the groans of the dying, form the mingled scene of tumult, strife, and death, which the Canon has so frequently transferred to his chivalrous pages.

It was not in war alone that the adventurous knight was to acquire fame. It was his duty, as we have seen, to seek adventures throughout the world, whereby to exalt his own fame and the beauty of his mistress, which inspired such deeds. In our remarks upon the general spirit of the institution, we have already noticed the frantic enterprises which were seriously undertaken and punctually executed by knights desirous of a name. On those occasions, the undertaker of so rash an enterprise often owed his life to the sympathy of his foes, who had great respect for any one engaged in the discharge of a vow of chivalry. When Sir Robert Knowles passed near Paris, at the head of an English army, in the reign of Edward III., the following remarkable incident took place :

"Now it happened, one Tuesday morning, when the English began to decamp, and had set fire to all the villages wherein they were lodged, so that the fires were distinctly seen from Paris, a knight of their army, who had made a vow, the preceding day, that he would advance as far as the barriers and strike them with his lance, did not break his oath, but set off with his lance in his hand, his target on his neck, and completely armed except his helmet, and, spurring his steed, was followed by his squire on another courser, carrying the helmet. When he approached Paris, he put on the helmet, which his squire laced behind. He then galloped away, sticking spurs into his horse, and advanced prancing to strike the barriers. They were then open, and the lords and barons within imagined he intended to enter the town ; but he did not so mean, for having struck the gates according to his vow, he checked his horse and turned about. The French knights, who saw him thus retreat, cried out to him, 'Get away ! get away ! thou hast well acquitted thyself.' As for the name of this knight, I am ignorant of it, nor do I know from what country he came ; but he bore for his arms gules à deux fesses noir, with une bordure noir non endentée.

"However, an adventure befell him, from which he had not so fortunate an escape. On his return, he met a butcher on the pavement in the suburbs, a very strong man, who had noticed him as he had passed him, and who had in his hand a very sharp and heavy hatchet with a long handle. As the knight was returning alone, and in a careless manner, the valiant butcher came on one side of him, and gave him such a blow between the shoulders, that he fell on his horse's neck ; he recovered himself, but the butcher repeated the blow on his head, so that the axe entered it. The knight, through excess of pain, fell to the earth, and the horse galloped away to the squire, who was wait-

ing for his master in the fields at the extremity of the suburbs. The squire caught the courser, but wondered what was become of his master ; for he had seen him gallop to the barriers, strike them, and then turn about to come back. He therefore set out to look for him ; but he had not gone many paces before he saw him in the hands of four fellows, who were beating him as if they were hammering on an anvil. This so much frightened the squire, that he dared not advance further, for he saw he could not give him any effectual assistance ; he therefore returned as speedily as he could.

"Thus was this knight slain ; and those lords who were posted at the barriers had him buried in holy ground. The squire returned to the army and related the misfortune which had befallen his master. All his brother warriors were greatly displeased thereat."—(JOHNES'S *Froissart*, vol. ii. p. 63.)

An equally singular undertaking was that of Galeazzo of Mantua, as rehearsed by the venerable Doctor Paris de Puteo, in his treatise *De Duello et re Militari*, and by Brantome in his *Essay on Duels*. Queen Joan of Naples, at a magnificent feast given in her castle of Gaeta, had presented her hand to Galeazzo, for the purpose of opening the ball. The dance being finished, the gallant knight kneeled down before his royal partner, and, in order to make fitting acknowledgment of the high honour done him, took a solemn vow to wander through the world wherever deeds of arm should be exercised, and not to rest until he had subdued two valiant knights, and had presented them prisoners at her royal footstool, to be disposed of at her pleasure. Accordingly, after a year spent in visiting various scenes of action in Brittany, England, France, Burgundy, and elsewhere, he returned like a falcon with his prey in his clutch, and presented two prisoners of knightly rank to Queen Joan. The queen received the gift very graciously ; and, declining to avail herself of the right she had to impose rigorous condition on the captives, she gave them liberty without ransom, and bestowed on them, over and above, several marks of liberality. For this she is highly extolled by Brantome and Dr. Paris, who take the opportunity of censuring the very opposite conduct of the Canons of St. Peter's Church at Rome, upon whom a certain knight had bestowed a prisoner taken in single combat. These ungracious churchmen received the gift as if it had been that of a wild beast for a menagerie, permitting the poor captive the freedom of the church indeed, but prohibiting him to go one step beyond the gate. In which condition, worse than death, they detained the vanquished knight for some time, and were justly blamed, as neither understanding Christian charity nor gentlemanlike courtesy.

We return to consider the duties of a knight. His natural and proper element was war. But in time of peace when there was no scope for the fiery spirit of chivalry, the knights attended the tourneys

proclaimed by different princes, or, if these amusements did not occur, they themselves undertook feats of arms, to which they challenged all competitors. The nature of these challenges will be best understood from an abridged account of the *pas d'armes*, called the *Jousts* of Saint Inglebert, or Sandying Fields. This emprise was sustained by three gallant knights of France, Bouçicaut, Reynold de Roy, and Saint Py or Saimpi. Their articles bound them to abide thirty days at Saint Inglebert in the marches of Calais, there to undertake the encounter of all knights and squires, Frenchmen, or strangers, who should come hither, for the breaking of five spears, sharp, or with rockets, at their pleasure. On their lodgings they hung two shields called of peace and war, with their armorial blazons on each. The stranger desiring to just was invited to come or send, and touch which shield he would. The weapons of courtesy were to be employed if he chose the shield of peace, if that of war, the defenders were to give him the desired encounter with sharp weapons. The stranger knights were invited to bring some noblemen with them, to assist in judging the field, and the proclamation concludes with an entreaty to knights and squires, strangers, that they will not hold this offer as made for any pride, hatred, or ill-will; but only that the challengers do it to have their honourable company and acquaintance, which, with their whole heart, they desire. They were assured of a fair field, without fraud or advantage; and it was provided that the shields used should not be covered with iron or steel. The French king was highly joyful of this gallant challenge (although some of his council doubted the wisdom of permitting it to go forth), and exhorted the challengers to regard the honour of their prince and realm, and spare no cost at the solemnity, for which he was willing to contribute ten thousand francs. A number of knights and squires came from England to Calais to accept this gallant invitation; and at the entrance of the "fresh and jolly month of May," the challengers pitched three green pavilions in a fair plain between Calais and the Abbey of Saint Inglebert. Two shields hung before each pavilion, with the arms of the owner.

"On the 21st of the month of May, as it had been proclaimed, the three knights were properly armed, and their horses properly saddled, according to the laws of the tournament. On the same day, those knights who were in Calais sallied forth, either as spectators or tilters, and, being arrived at the spot, drew up on one side. The place of the tournament was smooth and green with grass.

"Sir John Holland was the first who sent his squire to touch the war-target of Sir Bouçicaut, who instantly issued from his pavilion completely armed. Having mounted his horse and grasped his spear, which was stiff and well steeled, they took their distances. When the two knights had for a short time eyed each other, they spurred their horses, and met full gallop with such a force that Sir Bouçicaut pierced

the shield of the Earl of Huntingdon, and the point of his lance slipped along his arm, but without wounding him. The two knights, having passed, continued their gallop to the end of the list. This course was much praised. At the second course, they hit each other slightly, but no harm was done ; and their horses refused to complete the third.

"The Earl of Huntingdon, who wished to continue the tilt, and was heated, returned to his place, expecting that Sir Bouçicaud would call for his lance ; but he did not, and showed plainly he would not that day tilt more with the Earl. Sir John Holland, seeing this, sent his squire to touch the war-target of the Lord de Saimpi. This knight, who was waiting for the combat, sallied out from his pavilion, and took his lance and shield. When the Earl saw he was ready, he violently spurred his horse, as did the Lord de Saimpi. They couched their lances, and pointed them at each other. At the onset, their horses crossed ; notwithstanding which, they met ; but by this crossing, which was blamed, the Earl was unhelmed. He returned to his people, who soon rehelled him ; and, having resumed their lances, they met full gallop, and hit each other with such a force, in the middle of their shields, they would have been unhorsed, had they not kept tight seats by the pressure of their legs against their horses' sides. They went to the proper places, where they refreshed themselves, and took breath.

"Sir John Holland, who had a great desire to shine at this tournament, had his helmet braced, and regrasped his spear : when the Lord de Saimpi, seeing him advance on the gallop, did not decline meeting, but, spurring his horse on instantly, they gave blows on their helmets, that were, luckily, of well-tempered steel, which made sparks of fire fly from them. At this course the Lord de Saimpi lost his helmet ; but the two knights continued their career, and returned to their places.

"This tilt was much praised, and the English and French said, that the Earl of Huntingdon, Sir Bouçicaud, and the Lord de Saimpi, had excellently well justed, without sparing or doing themselves any damage. The Earl wished to break another lance in honour of his lady but it was refused him. He then quitted the lists to make room for others, for he had run his six lances with such ability and courage as gained him praise from all sides."—(JOHNES'S *Froissart*, vol. iv., p. 143.)

The other justs were accomplished with similar spirit ; Sir Peter Courtney, Sir John Russel, Sir Peter Sherburn, Sir William Clifton, and other English knights, sustaining the honour of their country against the French, who behaved with the greatest gallantry ; and the whole was regarded as one of the most gallant enterprises which had been fulfilled for some time.

Besides these dangerous amusements, the unsettled and misruled state of things during the feudal times, found a gentle knight, anxious

to support the oppressed and to put down injustice, and agreeably to his knightly vow, frequent opportunities to exercise himself in the use of arms. There were everywhere to be found oppressors to be chastised, and evil customs to be abolished, and the knight's occupation not only permitted, but actually bound him to volunteer his services in such cases. We shall greatly err if we suppose that the adventures told in romance are as fictitious as its magic, its dragons, and its fairies. The machinery was indeed imaginary, or rather, like that of Homer, it was grounded on the popular belief of the times. But the turn of incidents resembled, in substance, those which passed almost daily under the eye of the narrator. Even the stupendous feats of prowess displayed by the heroes of those tales against the most overwhelming odds, were not without parallel in the history of the times. When men fought hand to hand, the desperate exertions of a single champion, well mounted and armed in proof, were sometimes sufficient to turn the fate of a disputed day, and the war-cry of a well-known knight struck terror farther than his arms. The advantage possessed by such an invulnerable champion over the half-naked infantry of the period, whom he might pursue and cut down at his pleasure, was so great, that, in the insurrection of the peasants called the *Jacquerie*, the Earl of Foix and the Captal de Buche, their forces not being nearly as one to ten, hesitated not to charge these disorderly insurgents, with their men-at-arms, and were supposed to have slain nearly seven thousand, following the execution of the fugitives with as little mercy as the peasants had shown during the brief success of their rebellion.

The right which crown-vassals claimed and exercised, of imposing exorbitant tolls and taxes within their domains, was often resisted by the knights errant of the day, whose adventures, in fact, approached much nearer to those of Don Quixote than perhaps our readers are aware of. For although the Knight of La Mancha was, perhaps, two centuries too late in exercising his office of redresser of wrongs, and although his heated imagination confounded ordinary objects with such as were immediately connected with the exercise of Chivalry, yet at no great distance from the date of the inimitable romance of Cervantes, real circumstances occurred, of a nature nearly as romantic as the achievements which Don Quixote aspired to execute. In the more ancient times, the wandering knight could not go far without finding some gentleman oppressed by a powerful neighbour, some captive immured in a feudal dungeon, some orphan deprived of his heritage, some traveller pillaged, some convent or church violated, some lady in need of a champion, or some prince engaged in a war with a powerful adversary,—all of which incidents furnished fit occasion for the exercise of his valour. By degrees, as order became more generally established, and the law of each state began to be strong enough for the protection of the subject, the interference of these self-authorized and self-depen-

dent champions, who besides were, in all probability, neither the most judicious or moderate, supposing them to be equitable, mediators, became a nuisance rather than an assistance to civil society; and undoubtedly this tended to produce those distinctions in the order of knighthood which we are now to notice.

The most ancient, and originally the sole order of knighthood, was that of the Knight-Bachelor. This was the proper degree conferred by one knight on another, without the interference either of prince, noble, or churchman, and its privileges and duties approached nearly to those of the knight-errant. Were it possible for human nature to have acted up to the pitch of merit required by the statutes of chivalry, this order might have proved for a length of time a substitute for imperfect policy,—a remedy against feudal tyranny,—a resource for the weak when oppressed by the strong. Unquestionably, in many individual instances, knights were all that we have described them. But the laws of chivalry, like those of the ascetic orders, while announcing a high tone of virtue and self-denial, unfortunately afforded the strongest temptations to those who professed its vows to abuse the character which they assumed. The degree of knighthood was easily attained, and did not subject the warrior on whom it was bestowed to any particular tribunal in case of his abusing the powers which it conferred. Thus the knight became, in many instances, a wandering and licentious soldier, carrying from castle to castle, and from court to court, the offer of his mercenary sword, and frequently abusing his character, to oppress those whom his oath bound him to protect. The license and foreign vices imported by those who had returned from the crusades, the poverty also to which noble families were reduced by those fatal expeditions, all aided to throw the quality of knight-bachelor lower in the scale of honour, when unsupported by birth, wealth, or the command of followers.

The poorest knight-bachelor, however, long continued to exercise the privileges of the order. Their title of bachelor (or *Bas Chevalier*, according to the best derivation) marked that they were early held in inferior estimation to those more fortunate knights, who had extensive lands and numerous vassals. They either attached themselves to the service of some prince or rich noble, and were supported at their expense, or they led the life of mere adventurers. There were many knights, who, like Sir Gaudwin in the romance of *Partenopex de Blois*, subsisted by passing from one court, camp, and tournament to another, and contrived even, by various means open to persons of that profession, to maintain, at least for a time, a fair and goodly appearance.

' So riding, they o'ertake an errant-knight
Well horsed, and large of limb, Sir Gaudwin hight;
He nor of castle nor of land was lord,
Houseless, he reap'd the harvest of the sword,

And now, not more on fame than profit bent,
 Rode with blithe heart unto the tournament ;
 For cowardice he held it deadly sin,
 And sure his mind and bearing were akin,
 The face an index to the soul within.
 It seem'd that he, such pomp his train bewray'd,
 Had shaped a goodly fortune by his blade ;
 His knaves were, point device, in livery dight,
 With sumpter-nags, and tents for shelter in the night."

These bachelor-knights, as Mr. Rose has well described Sir Gaudwin, set their principal store by valour in battle ; and perhaps it was the only quality of chivalry which they at all times equally prized and possessed. Their boast was to be the children of war and fight, living in no other atmosphere but what was mingled with the dust of conflict, and the hot breath of charging steeds. A "gentle bachelor" is so described in one of the *Fabliaux* translated by Mr. Way :

"What gentle bachelor is he,
 Sword-begot in fighting field,
 Rock'd and cradled in a shield,
 Whose infant food a helm did yield."

His resistless gallantry in tournament and battle,—the rapidity with which he traversed land and sea, from England and Switzerland, to be present at each remarkable occasion of action,—with his hardihood in enduring every sort of privation,—and his generosity in rewarding minstrels and heralds,—his life of hazard and turmoil,—and his deeds of strength and fame,—are all enumerated. But we hear nothing of his redressing wrongs, or of his protecting the oppressed. The knight-bachelor, according to this picture, was a valiant prize-fighter, and lived by the exercise of his weapons.

In war, the knight-bachelor had an opportunity of maintaining, and even of enriching himself, if fortunate, by the ransom of such prisoners as he happened to take in fight. If, in this way, he accumulated wealth, he frequently employed it in levying followers, whose assistance, with his own, he hired out to such sovereigns as were willing to set a sufficient price on his services. In time of peace, the tournaments afforded, as we have already observed, a certain means of income to these adventurous champions. The horses and arms of the knights who succumbed on such occasions, were forfeited to the victors, and these the wealthy were always willing to reclaim by a payment in money. At some of the achievements in arms, the victors had the right, by the conditions of the encounter, to impose severe terms on the vanquished, besides the usual forfeiture of horse and armour. Sometimes the unsuccessful combatant ransomed himself from imprisonment, or other hard conditions, by a sum of money ; a transaction in which the knights-bachelors, such as we have described them, readily engaged. These adventurers called the sword which they used

in tournays, their *gagne-pain*, or bread-winner, as itinerant fiddlers of our days denominate their instruments.

"Dont i est gaigne-pain nommée,
Car par li est gaignés li pains."

Pelerinage du Monde, par Guigneville.

Men of such roving and military habits, subsisting by means so precarious, and lying under little or no restraint from laws, or from the social system, were frequently dangerous and turbulent members of the commonwealth. Every usurper, tyrant, or rebel, found knights-bachelors to espouse his cause in numbers proportioned to his means of expenditure. They were precisely the "landless resolute," whom any adventurer of military fame or known enterprise could easily collect,

"For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't."

Sometimes knights were found who placed themselves directly in opposition to all law and good order, headed independent bands of depredators, or, to speak plainly, of robbers, seized upon some castle as a place of temporary retreat, and laid waste the country at their pleasure. In the disorderly reigns of Stephen and of King John, many such leaders of banditti were found in England. And France, in the reign of John and his successors, was almost destroyed by them. Many of these leaders were knights, or squires, and almost all pretended that in their lawless licence they only exercised the rights of chivalry, which permitted, and even enjoined, its votaries to make war without any authority but their own, whenever a fair cause of quarrel occurred.

These circumstances brought the profession of knight-bachelor into suspicion, as, in other cases, the poverty of those who held the honour exposed it to contempt in their person. The sword did not always reap a good harvest; an enterprise was unfortunate, or a knight was discomfited. In such circumstances, he was obliged to sell his arms and horse, and endure all the scorn which is attached to poverty. In the beautiful lay of Lanval, and in the corresponding tale of Gruelán, the story opens with the picture of the hero reduced to indigence, dunned by his landlord, and exposed to contempt by his beggarly equipment. And when John de Vienne and his French men-at-arms returned from Scotland, disgusted with the poverty and ferocity of their allies, without having had any opportunity to become wealthy at the expense of the English, and compelled before their departure to give satisfaction for the insolencies which they committed towards the inhabitants, "divers knights and squires had passage and so returned, some into Flanders, and as wind and weather would drive them, without horse and harness, right poor and feeble, cursing the day that ever they came into Scotland, saying that never man had so hard a voyage." (Berner's *Froissart*, vol. ii. (reprint) p. 32.) The frequent prohibition

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of tournaments, both by the Church and by the more peaceful sovereigns, had also its necessary effect in impoverishing the knights-bachelors, to whom, as we have seen, these exhibitions afforded one principal means of subsistence. This is touched upon in one of the French *fabliaux*, as partly the cause of the poverty of a chevalier, whose distresses are thus enumerated :

" Listen, gentles, while I tell
How this knight in fortune fell :
Lands nor vineyards had he none,
Justs and war his living won ;
Well on horseback could he prance,
Boldly could he break a lance,
Well he knew each warlike use ;
But there came a time of truce,
Peaceful was the land around,
Nowhere heard a trumpet sound ;
Rust the shield and falchion hid,
Just and tourney were forbid ;
All his means of living gone,
Ermine mantle had he none,
And in pawn had long been laid
Cap and mantle of brocade,
Harness rich and charger stout,
All were eat and drunken out."*

As the circumstances which we have mentioned, tended to bring the order of knight-bachelor in many instances into contempt, the great and powerful attempted to intrench themselves within a circle which should be inaccessible to the needy adventurers whom we have described. Hence the institution of knights-banneret was generally received.

The distinction between the knight-banneret and the knight-bachelor was merely in military rank and precedence, and the former may rather be accounted an institution of policy than of chivalry. The bachelor displayed, or was entitled to display, a pennon or forked ensign. The knight-banneret had the right of raising a proper *banner*, from which his appellation was derived. He held a middle rank, beneath the barons or great feudatories of the crown, and above the knights-bachelors. The banner from which he took his title was a flag squared at the end, which, however, in strictness was oblong, and not an exact square on all the sides, which was the proper emblem of a baron. Du Tillet reports, that the Count de Leval challenged Sir Roul de Couequens' right to raise a square banner, being a banneret, and not a baron, and adds, that he was generally ridiculed for this presumption, and called the knight with the square ensign. The circumstance of the encroachment plainly shows, that the distinction was not absolutely settled, nor have we found the ensign of the bannerets anywhere described except as being generally a square standard. Indeed it was

* See the original in the republication of Barbazan's *Fabliaux*. vol. iii., p. 410.

only the pennon of the knight a little altered; for he who aspired to be a banneret received no higher gradation in chivalry, as attached to his person, and was inducted into his new privileges, merely by the commander-in-chief, upon the eve of battle, cutting off the swallow-tail or forked termination of the pennon.

In the appendix of Joinville's *Memoirs*, there is an essay on the subject of the bannerets, in which the following account of them is quoted from the ancient book of Ceremonies :

"COMME UN BACHELIER PEUT LEVER BANNIERE, ET DEVENIR BANNERET.

"Quant un bachelier a grandement servi et suivy la guerre, et que il a assez terre, et que 'il puisse avoir gentilshommes ses hommes, et pour accompagner sa banniere, il peut licitement lever banniere, et non autrement. Car nul homme ne doit porter, ne lever banniere en bataille, s'il n'a du moins cinquante hommes d'armes, tous ses hommes et les archiers, et arbalestriers qui y appartiennent. Et s'il les a 'il doit à la première bataille, ou il se trouvera, apporter un pennon, de ses armes, et doit venir au connestable, ou aux marischaux, ou à celui qui sera lieutenant de l'ost pour le prince, requirer qu'il porte banniere; et s'il lui octroient, doit sommer les heraux pour tesmoignage, et doivent couper la queue du pennon, et alors de loit porter et lever avant les autres bannieres, au dessoubz des autrès barons."

There is this same ceremonial, in a chapter, respecting the banneret, in these terms :

"COMME SE DOIT MAINTENIR UN BANNERET EN BATAILLE.

"Le banneret doit avoir cinquante lances, et les gens de trait qui y appartiennent : c'est à savoir les xxv. pour lui, et sa banniere garder. Et doit estre sa banniere dessoubz des barons. Et s'il y a autres banniere ils doivent mettre leurs bannieres à l'onneur, chacun selon son endroit, et pareillement tout homme qui porte banniere."

Froissart, always our best and most amusing authority, gives an account of the manner in which the celebrated Sir John Chandos was made banneret by the Black Prince, before the battle of Navarete. The whole scene forms a striking picture of an army of the middle ages moving to battle. Upon the pennons of the knights, penoncelles of the squires, and banners of the barons and bannerets, the army formed, or, in modern phrase, dressed its line. The usual word of the attack was, "Advance banners, in the name of God and Saint George."

"When the sun was risen, it was a beautiful sight to view these battalions, with their brilliant armour glittering with its beams. In this manner, they nearly approached to each other. The Prince, with a few attendants, mounted a small hill, and saw very clearly the enemy marching straight towards them. Upon descending this hill, he extended his line of battle in the plain, and then halted.

"The Spaniards, seeing the English halted, did the same, in order of battle; then each man tightened his armour, and made ready for instant combat.

"Sir John Chandos advanced in front of the battalions with his banner uncased in his hand. He presented it to the Prince, saying, 'My lord, here is my banner; I present it to you, that I may display it in whatever manner shall be most agreeable to you; for, thanks to God, I have now sufficient lands that will enable me so to do, and maintain the rank which it ought to hold.

"The Prince, Don Pedro being present, took the banner in his hands, which was blazoned with a sharp stake gules, on a field argent; after having cut off the tail to make it square, he displayed it, and, returning it to him by the handle, said, 'Sir John, I return you your banner, God give you strength and honour to preserve it.'

"Upon this, Sir John left the Prince, went back to his men, with the banner in his hand, 'Gentlemen, behold my banner and yours; you will, therefore, guard it as it becomes you.' His companions, taking the banner, replied with much cheerfulness, that 'if it pleased God and St. George, they would defend it well, and act worthily of it, to the utmost of their abilities.'

"The banner was put into the hands of a worthy English squire, called William Allestry, who bore it with honour that day, and loyally acquitted himself in the service. The English and Gascons soon after dismounted on the heath, and assembled very orderly together, each lord under his banner or pennon, in the same battle-array as when they passed the mountains. It was delightful to see and examine these banners and pennons, with the noble army that was under them."

It should not be forgotten, that Sir John Chandos exerted himself so much to maintain his new honour, that, advancing too far among the Spaniards, he was unhorsed, and, having grappled with a warrior of great strength, called Martin Ferrand, he fell undermost, and must have been slain had he not bethought him of his dagger, with which he stabbed his gigantic antagonist. (*Johnes's Froissart*, vol. i. p. 731.)

A banneret was expected to bring into the field at least thirty men-at-arms, that is, knights or squires mounted, and in complete order, at his own expense. Each man-at-arms, besides his attendants on foot, ought to have a mounted crossbowman, and a horseman armed with a bow and axe. Therefore, the number of horsemen alone, who assembled under a banner, was at least three hundred, and, including followers on foot, might amount to a thousand men. The banneret might, indeed, have arrayed the same force under a pennon, but his accepting a banner bound him to bring out that number at least. There is no room, however, to believe, that these regulations were very strictly observed.

In the reign of Charles VII., the nobles of France made a remon-

strance to the king, setting forth, that their estates were so much wasted by the long and fatal wars with England, that they could no longer support the number of men attached to the dignity of banneret. The companies of men-at-arms, which had hitherto been led by knights of that rank, and the distinction between knights-bannerets and knights-bachelors, was altogether disused from that period.* In England the title survived, but in a different sense. Those who received knight-hood in a field of battle, where the royal standard was displayed, were called knights-bannerets. Thus, King Edward VII. notices in his *Journal*, that, after the battle of Pinkie, "Mr. Brian Sadler and Vane were made bannerets."

The distinction of banneret was not the only subdivision of knight-hood. The special privileged fraternities, orders, or associations of knights, using a particular device, or embodied for a particular purpose, require also to be noticed. These might, in part, be founded upon the union which knights were wont to enter into with each other as "companions in arms," than which nothing was esteemed more sacred. The partners were united for weal and woe, and no crime was accounted more infamous than to desert or betray a companion-at-arms. They had the same friends and the same foes; and as it was the genius of chivalry to carry every virtuous and noble sentiment to the most fantastic extremity, the most extravagant proofs of fidelity to this engagement were often exacted or bestowed. The beautiful romance of *Ames and Amélin*, in which a knight slays his own child to make a salve with its blood to cure the leprosy of his brother-in-arms, turns entirely on this extravagant pitch of sentiment.

To this fraternity only two persons could, with propriety, bind themselves. But the various orders, which had in view particular objects of war, or were associated under the authority of particular sovereigns, were also understood to form a bond of alliance and brotherhood amongst themselves.

The great orders of the Templars and Knights-Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem, as well as that of the Teutonic knights, were military associations, created, the former for defence of the Holy Land, and the last for conversion (by the edge of the sword of course) of the Pagans in the north of Europe. They were managed by commanders or superintendents, and by a grand master, forming a sort of military republic, the individuals of which were understood to have no distinct property or interest from the order in general. But the system and history of these associations will be found under the proper heads.

Other subdivisions arose from the various associations, also called orders, formed by the different sovereigns of Europe, not only for the natural purpose of drawing around their persons the flower of knight-

* See the works of Pasquier, Du Tillet, Le Gendre, and other French antiquaries.

hood, but often with political views of much deeper import. The romances which were the favourite reading of the time, or which, at least, like the servant in the comedy, the nobles "had read to them," and which were on all occasions quoted gravely, as the authentic and authoritative records of chivalry, afforded the most respectable precedents for the formation of such fraternities under the auspices of sovereign princes; the Round Table of King Arthur, and the Paladins of Charlemagne, forming cases strictly in point. Edward III., whose policy was equal to his love of chivalry, failed not to avail himself of these precedents, not only for the exaltation of military honour and exercise of warlike feats, but questionless that he might draw around him, and attach to his person, the most valiant knights from all quarters of Europe. For this purpose, in the year 1344, he proclaimed as well in Scotland, France, Germany, Hainault, Spain, and other foreign countries, as in England, that he designed to revive the Round Table of King Arthur, offering free conduct and courteous reception to all who might be disposed to attend the splendid justs to be held upon that occasion at Windsor Castle. This solemn festival, which Edward proposed to render annual, excited the jealousy of Philip de Valois, King of France, who not only prohibited his subjects to attend the Round Table at Windsor, but proclaimed an opposite Round Table to be held by himself at Paris. In consequence of this interference, the festival of Edward lost some part of its celebrity, and was diminished in splendour and frequency of attendance. This induced King Edward to establish the memorable Order of the Garter. Twenty-six of the most noble knights of England and Gascony were admitted into this highly honourable association, the well-known motto of which (*Honi soit qui mal y pense*) seems to apply to the misrepresentation which the French monarch might throw out respecting the order of the Garter, as he had already done concerning the festival of the Round Table. There was so much dignity, as well as such obvious policy, in selecting from the whole body of chivalry a select number of champions to form an especial fraternity under the immediate patronage of the sovereign; it held out such a powerful stimulus to courage and exertion to all whose eyes were fixed on so dignified a reward of ambition, that various orders were speedily formed in the different courts of Europe, each having its own peculiar bandages, emblems, and statutes. To enumerate these is the task of the herald, not of the historian, who is only called upon to notice their existence and character. The first effect of these institutions on the spirit of chivalry in general, was doubtless favourable, as holding forth to the knighthood a high and honourable prize of emulation. But when every court in Europe, however petty, had its own peculiar order and ceremonial, while the great potentates established several; these dignities became so common, as to throw into the shade the order of knights-bachelors, the parent and proper degree

of chivalry, in comparison to which the others were mere innovations. The last distinction introduced, when the spirit of chivalry was almost totally extinguished, was the degree of knight baronet.

The degree of baronet, or of hereditary knighthood, might have been, with greater propriety, termed an inferior rank of noblesse, than an order of chivalry. Nothing can be more alien from the original idea of chivalry, than that knighthood could be bestowed on an infant, who could not have deserved the honour or be capable of discharging its duties. But the way had been already opened for this anomaly, by the manner in which the orders of foreign knighthood had been conferred upon children and infants in nonage. Some of these honours were also held by right of blood; the Dauphin of France, for example, being held to be born a knight of the Holy Ghost, without creation; and men had already long lost sight of the proper use and purpose of knighthood, which was now regarded and valued only as an honorary distinction of rank, that imposed no duties, and required no qualifications, or period of preliminary noviciate. The creation of this new dignity, as is well known, was a device of James I. to fill those cofers which his folly and profusion had emptied; and although the pretext of a Nova Scotia, or of an Ulster settlement, was used as the apology for the creation of the order, yet it was perfectly understood, that the real value given was the payment of a certain sum of money. The cynical Osborne describes this practice of the sale of honours, which, in their origin, were designed as the reward and pledge of chivalrous merit, with satirical emphasis.

“At this time the honour of knighthood, which antiquity reserved sacred, as the cheapest and readiest jewel to present virtue with, was promiscuously laid on any head belonging to the yeomandry (made addle through pride and a contempt of their ancestor's pedigree), that had but a court-friend, or money to purchase the favour of the meanest able to bring him into an outward roome, when the king, the fountaine of honour, came downe, and was uninterrupted by other businesse: in which case, it was then usuall for him to grant a commission for the chamberlaine, or some other lord, to do it.”

Having noticed the mode in which knighthood was conferred, and the various subdivisions of the order in general, it is proper to notice the mode in which a knight might be degraded from his rank. This forfeiture might take place from crimes either actually committed, or presumed by the law of arms. The list of crimes for which a knight was actually liable to degradation corresponded to his duties. As devotion, the honour due to ladies, valour, truth, and loyalty, were the proper attributes of chivalry,—so heresy, insults or oppression of females, cowardice, falsehood, or treason, caused his degradation. And heraldry, an art which might be said to bear the shield of chivalry, assigned to such degraded knights and their descendants peculiar bearings, called

in blazonry abatements, though it may be doubted if these were often worn or displayed.

The most common case of a knight's degradation, occurred in the appeal to the judgment of God by the single combat in the lists. In the appeal to this awful criterion, the combatants, whether personally concerned, or appearing as champions, were understood, in martial law, to take on themselves the full risk of all consequences. And, as the defendant, or his champion, in case of being overcome, was subjected to the punishment proper to the crime of which he was accused, so the appellant, if vanquished, was, whether a principal or substitute, condemned to the same doom to which his success would have exposed the accused. Whichever combatant was vanquished he was liable to the penalty of degradation; and, if he survived the combat, the disgrace to which he was subjected was worse than death. His spurs were cut off close to his heels, with a cook's cleaver; his arms were basted and reversed by the common hangman; his belt was cut to pieces, and his sword broken. Even his horse showed his disgrace, the animal's tail being cut off, close to the rump, and thrown on a dung-hill. The death-bell tolled, and the funeral service was said, for a knight thus degraded, as for one dead to knightly honour. And, if he fell in the appeal to the judgment of God, the same dishonour was done to his senseless corpse. If alive, he was only rescued from death to be confined in the cloister. Such, at least, were the strict rules of chivalry, though the courtesy of the victor, or the clemency of the prince, might remit them in favourable cases.

Knights might also be degraded without combat, when convicted of a heinous crime. In *Stowe's Chronicle*, we find the following minute account of the degradation of Sir Andrew Harclay, created Earl of Carlisle by Edward II., for his valiant defence of that town against the Scots, but afterwards accused of traitorous correspondence with Robert the Bruce, and tried before Sir Anthony Lucy.

"He was ledde to the barre as an earle worthily apparelled, with his sword girt about him, horsed, booted, and spurred, and unto whom Sir Anthony spake in this manner. Sir Andrewe (quoth he,) the King, for thy valiant service, hath done thee great honour, and made thee Earle of Carlile; since which tyme, thou, as a traytor to thy Lord the King, leddest his people, that shoulde have holpe him at the battell of Heighland, awaie by the county of Copland, and through the earledom of Lancaster, by which meanes, our Lorde the King was discomfitted there of the Scottes, through thy treason and falsenesse; whereas, if thou haddest come betimes, he hadde had the victorie: and this treason thou committedst for ye great summe of golde and silver that thou receivedst of James Dowglasse, a Scot, the King's enemy. Our Lord the King will, therefore, that the order of knighthood by the which thou receivedst all thine honour and worship uppon thy bodie, be brought to nought,

and thy state undone, that other knights, of lower degree, may after thee beware, and take example truly to serve.

"Then commanded he to hesne his spures from his heeles, then to break his sword over his head, which the King had given him to keepe and defend his land therewith, when he made him Earle. After this, he let unclothe him of his furred tabard, and of his hooode, of his coate of armes, and also of his girdle: and when this was done, Sir Anthony sayde unto him, Andrewe (quoth he) now art thou no knight, but a knave; and, for thy treason, the King will that thou shalte be hanged and drawne, and thyne head smitten off from thy bodie, and burned before thee, and thy bodie quartered: and thy head being smitten off, afterwarde to be set upon London bridge, and thy foure quarters shall be sent into foure good townes of England, that all other may beware by thee. And as Anthony Lucy hadde sayde, so was it done in all things, on the last daie of October."

III. We are arrived at the third point proposed in our arrangement, the causes, namely, of the decay and extinction of chivalry.

The spirit of chivalry sunk gradually under a combination of physical and moral causes; the first arising from the change gradually introduced into the art of war, and the last from the equally great alteration produced by time in the habits and modes of thinking in modern Europe. Chivalry began to dawn in the end of the tenth, and beginning of the eleventh century. It blazed forth with high vigour during the crusades, which indeed may be considered as exploits of national knight-errantry, or general wars, undertaken on the very same principles which actuated the conduct of individual knights adventurers. But its most brilliant period was during the wars between France and England, and it was unquestionably in those kingdoms that the habit of constant and honourable opposition, unembittered by rancour or personal hatred, gave the fairest opportunity for the exercise of the virtues required from him whom Chaucer terms "a very perfect gentle knight." Froissart frequently makes allusions to the generosity exercised by the French and English to their prisoners, and contrasts it with the dungeons to which captives taken in war were consigned both in Spain and Germany. Yet both these countries, and indeed every kingdom in Europe, partook of the spirit of chivalry in a greater or less degree; and even the Moors of Spain caught the emulation, and had their orders of knighthood as well as the Christians. But even during this splendid period, various causes were silently operating the future extinction of the flame, which blazed thus wide and brightly.

An important discovery, the invention of gunpowder, had taken place, and was beginning to be used in war, even when chivalry was in its highest glory. It is said Edward III. had field-pieces at the battle of Cressy (1346,) and the use of guns is mentioned even earlier. But the force of gunpowder was long known and used, ere it made any

material change in the art of war. The long-bow continued to be the favourite, and it would seem the more formidable missile weapon, for almost two centuries after guns had been used in war. Still every successive improvement was gradually rendering the invention of fire-arms more perfect, and their use more decisive of the fate of battle. In proportion as they came into general use, the suits of defensive armour began to be less generally worn. It was found, that these cumbrous defences, however efficient against lances, swords, and arrows, afforded no effectual protection against those more forcible missiles. The armour of the knight was gradually curtailed to a light head-piece, a cuirass, and the usual defences of men-at-arms. Complete harness was only worn by generals and persons of high rank, and that rather, it would seem, as a point of dignity than for real utility. The young nobility of France, especially, tired of the unwieldy steel coats in which their ancestors sheathed themselves, adopted the slender and light armour of the German Reiters, or mercenary cavalry. They also discontinued the use of the lance; in both cases, contrary to the injunctions of Henry IV. and the opinion of Sully. At length, the arms of the cavalry were changed almost in every particular from those which were proper to chivalry; and as, in such cases, much depends upon outward show and circumstance, the light-armed cavalier, who did not carry the weapons, or practise the exercises of knighthood, laid aside at the same time, the habits and sentiments peculiar to the order.

Another change, of vital importance, arose from the institution of the bands of gens-d'armes, or men-at-arms in France, constituted, as we have observed, expressly as a sort of standing army, to supply the place of bannerets, bachelors, squires, and other militia of early times. It was in the year 1445, that Charles VII. selected from the numerous chivalry of France fifteen companies of men-at-arms, called Les Compagnies d'Ordonnance, which were to remain in perpetual pay and subordination, and to enable the sovereign to dispense with the services of the tumultuary forces of chivalry, which, arriving and departing from the host at pleasure, collecting their subsistence by oppressing the country, and engaging in frequent brawls with each other, rather weakened than aided the cause they professed to support. The regulated companies, which were substituted for these desultory feudal levies, were of a more permanent and manageable description. Each company contained a hundred men-at-arms, and each man-at-arms was to be what was termed a *lance garnie*, that is, a mounted spearman, with his proper attendants, being four archers and a varlet, called a *coustillier*. Thus, each company consisted of six hundred horse, and the fifteen bands amounted to fifteen thousand cavalry. The charge of national defence was thus transferred from the chivalry of France, whose bold and desperate valour was sometimes rendered useless by their independent wilfulness and want of discipline, to a body of regular

forces, whose officers (a captain, lieutenant, and an ensign in each company) held command, not in virtue of their knighthood or banner-right, but as bearing direct commissions from the crown, as in modern times. At first, indeed, these bands of regulated gens-d'armes were formed of the same materials as formerly, though acting under a new system. The officers were men of the highest rank; the archers, and even the varlets, were men of honourable birth. When the Emperor Maximilian proposed that the French gens-d'armes should attempt to storm Padua, supported by the German lance-knechts or infantry, he was informed by Bayard, that, if the French men-at-arms were employed, they must be supported by those of the Germans, and not by the lance-knechts, because, in the French companies of ordonnance, every soldier was a gentleman. But, in the reign of Charles IX., we find the change natural to such a new order of things, was in complete operation. The King was content to seek, as qualifications for his men-at-arms, personal bravery, strength, and address in the use of weapons, without respect to rank or birth; and, probably, in many instances, men of inferior birth were preferred to fill up the ranks of these regulated bands. Monluc informs us in his *Commentaries*, that he made his first campaign, as an archer, in the Maréchal de Foix's company of gens-d'armes, "a situation much esteemed in those days, when many nobles served in that capacity. At present the rank is greatly degenerated." The complaints of the old noblesse, says Mezerai, were not without reason. Mean carabineers, they said, valets and lacqueys, were recruited in companies, which were put on the same footing with the ancient corps of gens-d'armes, whose officers were all barons of high rank, and almost every man-at-arms a gentleman by birth. These complaints, joined with the charge against Catherine of Medicis, that she had, by the creation of twenty-five new members of the order of Saint Michael, rendered its honours as common as the cockle-shells on the sea-shore, serve to show how early the first rude attempt at establishing a standing and professional army operated to the subversion of the ideas and privileges of chivalry. According to La Noue, it would seem that, in his time, the practice still prevailed of sending youths of good birth to serve as pages in the gens-d'armes; but, from the sort of society with whom they mixed in service of that sort, their natural spirit was rather debased, and rendered vulgar and brutal, than trained to honour and to gallantry.

A more fatal cause had, however, been for some time operating in England, as well as France, for the destruction of the system we are treating of. The wars of York and Lancaster in England, and those of the Huguenots and of the League, were of a nature so bitter and rancorous, as was utterly inconsistent with the courtesy, fair play, and gentleness, proper to chivalry. Where different nations are at strife together, their war may be carried on with a certain degree of moderation.

"During the foreign wars between France and Spain, especially in Piedmont," says La Noue, "we might often see a body of spears pass a village, where the peasants only interrupted their village dance to offer them refreshments; and, in a little after, a hostile troop receive, from the unoffending and unoffended inhabitants, the same courtesy. The two bodies would meet and fight gallantly, and the wounded of both parties would be transferred to the same village, lodged in the same places of accommodation, receive the same attention, and rest peaceably on each other's good faith till again able to take the field."

He contrasts this generosity with the miserable oppression of the civil wars, carried on by murdering, burning, and plundering friend and foe, armed and unarmed, alleging, all the while, the specious watchwords of God's honour, the King's service, the Catholic religion, the Gospel, our Country. In the end, he justly observes, "the soldiers become ravenous beasts, the country is rendered desert, wealth is wasted, the crimes of the great become a curse to themselves, and God is displeased." The bloody wars of the Rose in England, the execution of prisoners on each side, the fury and animosity which allowed no plea of mercy or courtesy, were scarce less destructive of the finer parts of the spirit of chivalry in England than those of the Huguenots in France.

The civil wars not only operated in debasing the spirit of chivalry, but in exhausting and destroying the particular class of society from which its votaries were drawn. To be of noble birth was not, indeed, absolutely essential to receiving the honour of knighthood, for men of low descent frequently attained it. But it required a distinguished display of personal merit to raise them out of the class where they were born, and the honours of chivalry were, generally speaking, appropriated to those of fair and gentle parentage. The noble families, therefore, were the source from which chivalry drew recruits; and it was upon the nobles that the losses, proscriptions, and forfeitures, of the civil wars chiefly fell. We have seen, that, in France, their poverty occasioned their yielding up the privilege of military command to the disposal of the crown. In England it was, fortunately, not so much the crown as the commons who rose on the ruins of feudal chivalry. But it is well known, that the civil wars had so exhausted the English nobility, as to enable Henry VII. to pass his celebrated statutes against those hosts of retainers, which struck, in fact, at the very root of their power. And, thus, Providence, whose ways bring good out of evil, laid the foundation of the future freedom of England in the destruction of what had long been its most constitutional ground of defence, and, in the subjugation of that system of chivalry, which, having softened the ferocity of a barbarous age, was now to fall into disuse, as too extravagant for an enlightened one.

In fact, it was not merely the changes which had taken place in the constitution of armies and fashion of the fight, nor the degraded and

weak state of the nobles, but also, and in a great degree, the more enlightened manners of the times, and the different channels into which enthusiasm and energy were directed, which gradually abolished the sentiments of chivalry. We have seen, that the abstract principles of chivalry were, in the highest degree, virtuous and noble, nay, that they failed by carrying to an absurd, exaggerated, and impracticable point, the honourable duties which they inculcated. Such doctrines, when they fail to excite enthusiasm, become exploded as ridiculous. Men's minds were now awakened to other and more important and complicated exercises of the understanding, and were no longer responsive to the subjects which so deeply interested their ancestors of the middle ages. Sciences of various kinds had been rekindled in the course of the sixteenth century; the arts had been awakened in a style of perfection unknown even to classical ages. Above all, religion had become the interesting study of thousands, and the innovating doctrines of the Reformers, while hailed with ecstasy by their followers, rejected as abominations by the Catholics, and debated fiercely by both parties, involved the nobility of Europe in speculations very different from the *arrêts* of the Court of Love, and demanded their active service in fields more bloody than those of tilt and tournament. When the historians or disputants on either side allude to the maxims of chivalry, it is in terms of censure and ridicule. Yet, if we judge by the most distinguished authorities on either side, the Reformers rejected as sinful what the Catholics were contented to brand as absurd. It is with no small advantage to the Huguenots,—to that distinguished party which produced Sully, D'Aubigné, Coligni, Duplessis-Mornay, and La Noue, that we contrast the moral severity with which they pass censure on the books of chivalry, with the licentious flippancy of Brantome, who ridicules the same works, on account of the very virtues which they inculcate. From the books of *Amadis de Gaul*, refining, as he informs us, upon the ancient vanities of Percforest, Tristan, Giron, &c., La Noue contends the age in which he lived derived the recommendation and practice of incontinence, of the poison of revenge, of neglect of sober and rational duty, desperate blood-thirstiness, under disguise of search after honour, and confusion of public order. "They are the instructions," he says, "of Apollyon, who, being a murderer from the beginning, delighteth wholly in promoting murder." Of the tournaments, he observes, "that such spectacles rendering habitual the sight of blows and blood, had made the court of France pitiless and cruel." "Let those," he exclaims, "who desire to feed their eyes with blood, imitate the manner of England, where they exercise their cruelty on brute beasts, bringing in bulls and bears to fight with dogs, a practice beyond comparison far more lawful than the jousts of chivalry."*

* *Discourses, Political and Military*, translated out of the French of La Noue, 1587.

It is curious to contrast the opinions of La Noue, a stern and moral reformer, and a skilful and brave soldier as France ever produced, although condemning all war that did not spring out of absolute necessity, with those of Brantome, a licentious courtier, who mixed the Popish superstitions, which stood him instead of religion, with a leaven of infidelity and blasphemy. From the opinions he has expressed, and from what he has too faithfully handed down as the manners of his court and age, it is plain that all which was valuable in the spirit of chivalry had been long renounced by the French noblesse. To mark this declension, it is only necessary to run over the various requisites already pointed out as necessary to form the chivalrous character, and contrast them with the opinions held in the end of the sixteenth century, in the court of the descendants of Saint Louis.

The spirit of devotion which the rules of chivalry inculcated, was so openly disavowed, that it was assigned as a reason for preferring the character of Sir Tristram to that of Sir Lancelot, that the former is described in romance as relying, like Mezentius, upon his own arm alone, whereas Lancelot, on engaging in fight, never failed to commend himself to God and the saints, which, in the more modern opinions of the gallants of France, argued a want of confidence in his own strength and valour.

The devotion with which the ancient knights worshipped the fair sex, was held as old-fashioned and absurd as that which they paid to Heaven. The honour paid to chastity and purity in the German forests, and transferred as a sacred point of duty to the sons of chivalry, was as little to be found in the court of France, according to Brantome, as the chastity and purity to which it was due. The gross and coarse sensuality which we have seen engrafted upon professions of Platonic sentiment, became finally so predominant, as altogether to discard all marks of sentimental attachment; and from the time of Catherine of Medicis, who trained her maids of honour as courtezans, the manners of the court of France seem to have been inferior in decency to those of a well-regulated bagnio. The sort of respect which these ladies were deemed entitled to, may be conjectured from an anecdote given by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, whose own character was formed upon the chivalrous model which was now become obsolete. As he stood in the trenches before a besieged place, along with Balagny, a celebrated duellist of the period, between whom and Lord Herbert some altercation had formerly occurred, the Frenchman, in a bravade, jumped over the entrenchment, and, daring Herbert to follow him, ran towards the besieged place, in the face of a fire of grape and musketry. Finding that Herbert outran him, and seemed to have no intention of turning back, Balagny was forced to set the example of retreating. Lord Herbert then invited him to an encounter upon the old chivalrous point, which had the fairer and more virtuous mistress; to which proposition Balagny replied by a jest so coarse as made the Englishman retort, that he spoke like a mean debauchee, not like a

cavalier and man of honour. As Balagny was one of the most fashionable gallants of his time, and, as the story shows, ready for the most harebrained achievements, his declining combat upon the ground of quarrel chosen by Lord Herbert, is a proof how little the former love of chivalry accorded with the gallantry of these later days.

Bravery, the indispensable requisite of the *preux chevalier*, continued, indeed, to be held in the same estimation as formerly; and the history of the age gave the most brilliant as well as the most desperate examples of it, both in public war and private encounter. But courage was no longer tempered with the good faith and courtesy,—*La bonté die gli cavalier antichi*, so celebrated by Ariosto. There no longer existed those generous knights, that one day bound the wounds of a generous enemy, guided him to a place of refuge, and defended him on the journey, and which on the next hesitated not to commit itself to the power of a mortal foe, without fear that he would break the faithful word he had pawned for the safety of his enemy. If such examples occur in the civil wars of France, they were dictated by the generosity of individuals who rose above the vices of their age, and were not demanded, as matters of right, from all who desired to stand well in public opinion. The intercourse with Italy, so fatal to France in many respects, failed not to imbue her nobility with the politics of Machiavel,—the coarse licentiousness of Aretin,—and the barbarous spirit of revenge, which held it wise to seek its gratification, not in fair encounter, but *per ogni modo*—in what manner soever it could be obtained. Duels, when they took place, were no longer fought in the lists, or in presence of judges of the field, but in lonely and sequestered places. Inequality of arms was not regarded, however great the superiority on one side. “Thou hast both a sword and dagger,” said Quelus to Antraguët, as they were about to fight, “and I have only a sword.”—“The more thy folly,” was the answer, “to leave thy dagger at home. We came to fight, not to adjust weapons.” The duel accordingly went forward, and Quelus was slain, his left hand (in which he should have had his dagger) being shockingly cut in attempting to parry his antagonist’s blows without that weapon. The challenged person having a right to choose his weapons, often endeavoured to devise such as should give him a decidedly unfair advantage. Brantôme records with applause the ingenuity of a little man, who, being challenged by a tall Gascon, made choice of a gorget so constructed, that his gigantic adversary could not stoop his neck, so as to aim his blows right. Another had two swords forged of a temper so extremely brittle, that, unless used with particular caution, and in a manner to which he daily exercised himself, the blade must necessarily fly in pieces. Both these ingenious persons killed their man with very little risk or trouble, and no less applause, it would seem, than if they had fought without fraud and covine. The seconds usually engaged, and when one of the combatants was slain, his antagonist did not hesi-

tate to assist his comrade in oppressing by odds him who remained. The *Little French Lawyer* of Fletcher turns entirely on this incident. By a yet more direct mode of murder, a man challenged to a duel was not always sure that his enemy was not to assassinate him by the assistance of ruffians at the place of rendezvous, of which Brantome gives several instances without much censure. The plighted word of an antagonist by no means ensured against treachery to the party to whom it was given. De Rosne, a gentleman well skilled in the practice and discipline of the wars, receiving a challenge from De Fargy, through the medium of a young man, who offered to pledge his word and faith for the fair conduct of his principal—made an answer which Brantome seems to approve as prudential. "I should be unwilling," he replied, "to trust my life upon a pledge on which I would not lend twenty crowns."

In many cases no ceremony was used, but the nobles assassinated each other without scruple or hesitation. Brantome gives several stories of the Baron des Vitaux, and terms his detestable murders brave and bold revenges.

But it would be endless to quote examples. It is enough to call to the reader's recollection the bloody secret of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which was kept by such a number of the Catholic noblemen for two years, at the expense of false treaties, promises, and perjuries innumerable, and the execution which followed on naked, unarmed, and unsuspecting men, in which so many gallants lent their willing swords.

In England, the free tone of the government, and the advantage of equal laws, administered without respect of persons, checked similar enormities, which, however, do not appear to have been thought, in all cases, inconsistent with the point of honour, which, if not, as in France, totally depraved from the ancient practices of chivalry, might probably have soon become so. Sir John Ayres did not hesitate to attack Lord Herbert with the assistance of his servants; and the outrage upon the person of Sir John Coventry, which gave rise to the Coventry act against cutting and maiming, evinced the same spirit of degenerate and blood-thirsty revenge. Lord Sanquhar, having lost an eye in a trial of skill with a master of defence, conceived that his honour required that he should cause the poor man to be assassinated by ruffians in his own school. But as this base action met its just reward at the gallows, the spirit of Italian revenge was probably effectually checked by such a marked example. At the gallows, the unfortunate nobleman expressed his detestation for the crime, which he then saw in all its enormity. "Before his trial," he said, "the devil had so blinded his understanding, that he could not understand that he had done amiss, or otherwise than befitting a man of high rank and quality, having been trained up to the court, and living the life of a soldier;

which sort of men," he said, "stood more on a point of honour than religion." The feelings of chivalry must have been indeed degraded, when so base an assassination was accounted a point of honour. In Scotland, the manners of which country, as is well observed by Robertson, strongly resembled those of France, the number of foul murders, during the sixteenth century, was almost incredible; and indeed assassination might be termed the most general vice of the sixteenth century.

From these circumstances, the total decay of chivalrous principle is sufficiently evident. As the progress of knowledge advanced, men learned to despise its fantastic refinements; the really enlightened, as belonging to a system inapplicable to the modern state of the world; the licentious, fierce, and subtle, as throwing the barriers of affected punctilio betwixt them and the safe, ready, and uncerecermonious gratification of their lust or their vengeance.

The system of chivalry, as we have seen, had its peculiar advantages during the middle ages. Its duties were not, and indeed could not, always be performed in perfection, but they had a strong influence on public opinion; and we cannot doubt that its institutions, virtuous as they were in principle, and honourable and generous in their ends, must have done much good and prevented much evil. We can now only look back on it as a beautiful and fantastic piece of frostwork, which has dissolved in the beams of the sun! But though we seek in vain for the pillars, the vaults, the cornices, and the fretted ornaments of the transitory fabric, we cannot but be sensible that its dissolution has left on the soil valuable tokens of its former existence. We do not mean, nor is it necessary to trace, the slight shades of chivalry, which are yet received in the law of England. An appeal to combat in a case of treason, was adjudged, in the celebrated case of Ramsay and Lord Reay, in the time of Charles I. An appeal of murder seems to have been admitted as legal, within the last year, and is perhaps still under decision. But it is not in such issues, rare as they must be, that we ought to trace the consequences of chivalry. We have already shown, that its effects are rather to be sought in the general feeling of respect to the female sex; in the rules of forbearance and decorum in society; in the duties of speaking truth and observing courtesy; and in the general conviction and assurance, that, as no man can encroach upon the property of another without accounting to the laws, so none can infringe on his personal honour, be the difference of rank what it may, without subjecting himself to personal responsibility. It will be readily believed that, in noticing the existence of duelling as a relic of chivalry, we do not mean to discuss the propriety of the custom. It is our happiness that the excesses to which this spirit is liable, are checked by the laws which wisely discountenance the practice; for, although the severity of the laws sometimes gives way to the force of public opinion,

they still remain an effectual restraint, in every case where the circumstances argue either wanton provocation or unfair advantage. It is to be hoped, that as the custom of appealing to this Gothic mode of settling disputes is gradually falling into disuse, our successors may enjoy the benefit of the general urbanity, decency, and courtesy, which it has introduced into the manners of Europe, without the necessity of having recourse to a remedy, not easily reconciled to law or to Christianity.

ESSAY ON ROMANCE.

DR. JOHNSON has defined romance, in its primary sense, to be "a military fable of the middle ages; a tale of wild adventures in love and chivalry." But although this definition expresses correctly the ordinary idea of the word, it is not sufficiently comprehensive to answer our present purpose. A composition may be a legitimate romance, yet neither refer to love nor chivalry—to war nor to the middle ages. The "wild adventures" are almost the only absolutely essential ingredient in Johnson's definition. We would be rather inclined to describe a *Romance* as "a fictitious narrative in prose or verse; the interest of which turns upon marvellous and uncommon incidents;" being thus opposed to the kindred term *Novel*, which Johnson has described as a "smooth tale, generally of love;" but which we would rather define as "a fictitious narrative, differing from the romance, because the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events, and the modern state of society." Assuming these definitions, it is evident, from the nature of the distinction adopted, that there may exist compositions which it is difficult to assign precisely or exclusively to the one class or the other; and which, in fact, partake of the nature of both. But the distinction will be found broad enough to answer all general and useful purposes.

The word Romance, in its original meaning, was far from corresponding with the definition now assigned. On the contrary, it signified merely one or other of the popular dialects of Europe, founded (as almost all these dialects were) upon the Roman tongue, that is, upon the Latin. The name of Romance was indiscriminately given to the Italian, to the Spanish, even (in one remarkable instance at least)* to the English language. But it was especially applied to the compound

* This curious passage was detected by the industry of Ritson in *Geraldus Cambrensis*. "*Ab eadem illa optima, quæ Scottice vocata est FROTH; Brittanice, WEIRD; Romane vero Scotticæ-Watire.*" Here the various names assigned to the Frith of Forth are given in the Gaelic or Earse, the British or Welsh; and the phrase *Roman* is applied to the ordinary language of England. But it would be difficult to show another instance of the English language being termed Roman or Romance.

language of France ; in which the Gothic dialect of the Franks, the Celtic of the ancient Gauls, and the classical Latin, formed the ingredients. Thus Robert De Brunne :

" All is calde geste Inglis,
That en this language spoken is—
Frankis speech is caled *Romance*,
So sayis clerkis and men of France."

At a period so early as 1150, it plainly appears that the Romance language was distinguished from the Latin, and that translations were made from the one into the other ; for an ancient Romance on the subject of Alexander, quoted by Fauchet, says it was written by a learned clerk,

" Quid de Latin la trest. et en Roman la mit."

The most noted Romances of the middle ages were usually composed in the Romance or French language, which was in a peculiar degree the speech of love and chivalry, and those which are written in English always affect to refer to some French original, which, usually, at least, if not in all instances, must be supposed to have had a real existence. Hence the frequent recurrence of the phrase,

" As in romance we read ;"

Or,

" Right as the romaunt us tells ;"

and equivalent phrases, well known to all who have at any time perused such compositions. Thus, very naturally, though undoubtedly by slow degrees, the very name of *romaunt*, or *romance*, came to be transferred from the language itself to that peculiar style of composition in which it was so much employed, and which so commonly referred to it. How early a transference so natural took place, we have no exact means of knowing ; but the best authority assures us, that the word was used in its modern and secondary sense so early as the reign of Edward III. Chaucer, unable to sleep during the night, informs us, that, in order to pass the time,

" Upon my bed I sate upright,
A ROMAUNCE, and he me it took
To read and drive the night away."

The book described as a Romance contained, as we are informed,

" Fables
That clerkis had, in old tyme,
And other poets, put in rhyme."

And the author tells us, a little lower,

" This boke ne spake but of such things,
Of Queens' lives and of Kings."

The volume proves to be no other than Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ; and

Chaucer, by applying to that work the name of Romance, sufficiently establishes that the word was, in his time, correctly employed under the modern acceptation.

Having thus accounted for the derivation of the word, our investigation divides itself into three principal branches, though of unequal extent. In the *FIRST* of these we propose to inquire into the general History and Origin of this peculiar species of composition, and particularly of Romances relating to European chivalry, which necessarily form the most interesting object of our inquiry, and in the *SECOND*, to give some brief account of the History of the romance of chivalry in the different states of Europe. *THIRDLY*, we propose to notice cursorily the various kinds of romantic composition by which the ancient romances of chivalry were followed and superseded, and with these notices to conclude the article.

I. In the views taken by Hurd, Percy, and other older authorities, of the origin and history of romantic fiction, their attentions were so exclusively fixed upon the romance of chivalry alone, that they seem to have forgotten that, however interesting and peculiar, it formed only one species of a very humorous and extensive genus. The progress of romance, in fact, keeps pace with that of society, which cannot long exist, even in the simplest state, without exhibiting some specimens of this attractive style of composition. It is not meant by this assertion that in early ages such narratives were invented, in the character of mere fictions, devised to pass away the leisure of those who have time enough to read and attend to them. On the contrary, romance and real history have the same common origin. It is the aim of the former to maintain as long as possible the mask of veracity; and indeed the traditional memorials of all earlier ages partake in such a varied and doubtful degree of the qualities essential to those opposite lines of composition, that they form a mixed class between them; and may be termed either romantic histories, or historical romances, according to the proportion in which their truth is debased by fiction, or their fiction mingled with truth.

A moment's glance at the origin of society will satisfy the reader why this can hardly be otherwise. The father of an isolated family, destined one day to rise from thence into a nation, may, indeed, narrate to his descendants the circumstances which detached him from the society of his brethren, and drove him to form a solitary settlement in the wilderness, with no other deviation from truth, on the part of the narrator, than arises from the infidelity of memory, or the exaggerations of vanity. But when the tale of the patriarch is related by his children, and again by his descendants of the third and fourth generation, the facts it contains are apt to assume a very different aspect. The vanity of the tribe augments the simple annals from one cause—

the love of the marvellous, so natural to the human mind, contributes its means of sophistication from another—while, sometimes, the king and the priest find their interest in casting a holy and sacred gloom and mystery over the early period in which their power arose. And thus altered and sophisticated from so many different motives, the real adventures of the founder of the tribe bear as little proportion to the legend recited among his children, as the famous hut of Loretto bears to the highly ornamented church with which superstition has surrounded and enchased it. Thus the definition which we have given of romance, as a fictitious narrative turning upon the marvellous or the supernatural, might, in a large sense, be said to embrace

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia,

or, in fine, the mythological and fabulous history of all early nations.

It is also important to remark, that poetry, or rather verse—rhythm at least of some sort or other, is originally selected as the best vehicle for these traditional histories. Its principal recommendation is probably the greater facility with which metrical narratives are retained in the memory—a point of the last consequence, until the art of writing is generally introduced: since the construction of the verse itself forms an artificial association with the sense, the one of which seldom fails to recall the other to recollection. But the medium of verse, at first adopted merely to aid the memory, becomes soon valuable on account of its other qualities. The march or measure of the stanza is gratifying to the ear, and, like a natural strain of melody, can be restrained or accelerated, so as to correspond with the tone of feeling which the words convey; while the recurrence of the necessary measure, rhythm, or rhyme, is perpetually gratifying the hearer by a sense of difficulty overcome. Verse being thus adopted as the vehicle of traditional history, there needs, but the existence of a single man of genius, in order to carry the composition a step higher in the scale of literature than that of which we are treating. In proportion to the skill which he attains in his art, the fancy and ingenuity of the artist himself are excited; the simple narrative transmitted to him by ruder rhymers is increased in length; is decorated with the graces of language, amplified in detail, and rendered interesting by description; until the brief and barren original bears as little resemblance to the finished piece, as the *Iliad* of Homer to the evanescent traditions, out of which the blind bard wove his tale of Troy Divine. Hence the opinion expressed by the ingenious Percy, and assented to by Ritson himself. When about to present to his readers an excellent analysis of the old romance of *Lybius Disconius*, and making several remarks on the artificial management of the story, the Bishop observes, that, “if an Epic poem may be defined a fable related by a poet to excite admi-

ration and inspire virtue, by representing the action of some one hero favoured by Heaven, who executes a great design in spite of all the obstacles that oppose him, I know not why we should withhold the name of *Epic Poem* from the piece which I am about to analyze.*

Yet although this levelling proposition has been laid down by Percy, and assented to by Ritson (writers who have few opinions in common,¹ and although, upon so general a view of the subject, the *Iliad*, or even the *Odyssey*, of Homer might be degraded into the class of romances, as *Le Beau Deconnu* is elevated into that of epic poems, there lies in ordinary speech, and in common sense, as wide a distinction between those two classes of composition, as there is betwixt the rude mystery or morality of the middle ages, and the regular drama by which these were succeeded. Where the art and the ornaments of the poet chiefly attract our attention—where each part of the narrative bears a due proportion to the others, and the whole draws gradually towards a final and satisfactory conclusion—where the characters are sketched with force, and sustained with precision—where the narrative is enlivened and adorned with so much, and no more, of poetical ornament and description, as may adorn, without impeding its progress—where this art and taste are displayed, supported, at the same time, by a sufficient tone of genius, and art of composition, the work produced must be termed an epic poem, and the author may claim his seat upon the high and honoured seat occupied by Homer, Virgil, and Milton. On the other hand, when a story languishes in tedious and minute details, and relies for the interest which it proposes to excite, rather upon the wild excursions of an unbridled fancy, than upon the skill of the poet—when the supernatural and the extraordinary are relied upon exclusively as the supports of the interest, the author, though his production may be distinguished by occasional flashes of genius, and though it may be interesting to the historian, as containing some minute fragments of real events, and still more so to the antiquary, from the light which it throws upon ancient manners, is still no more than a humble romancer, and his works must rank amongst those rude ornaments of a dark age, which are at present the subject of our consideration. Betwixt the extremes of the two classes of composition, there must, no doubt, exist many works, which partake in some degree of the character of both; and after having assigned most of them each to their proper class, according as they are distinguished by regularity of composition and poetical talent, or, on the contrary, by extravagance of imagination, and irregularity of detail, there may still remain some, in which these properties are so equally balanced, that it may be difficult to say to which class they belong. But although this may be the case in a very few instances, our taste and habits readily acknowledge as

* *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, III. xxvii. The Prelate is citing a discourse on Epic Poetry, prefixed to *Telemachus*.

complete and absolute a difference betwixt the Epopeia and Romance, as can exist between two distinct species of the same generic class.

We have said of Romance, that it first appears in the form of metrical history, professes to be a narrative of real facts, and is, indeed, nearly allied to such history as an early state of society affords ; which is always exaggerated by the prejudices and partialities of the tribe to which it belongs, as well as deeply marked by their idolatry and superstition. These it becomes the trade of the romancers still more to exaggerate, until the thread of truth can scarce be discerned in the web of fable which involves it ; and we are compelled to renounce all hope of deriving serious or authentic information from the materials upon which the compounders of fiction have been so long at work, from one generation to another, that they have at length obliterated the very shadow of reality or even probability.

The view we have given of the origin of Romance will be found to agree with the facts which the researches of so many active investigators of this curious subject have been able to ascertain. It is found, for example, and we will produce instances in viewing the progress of Romance in particular countries, that the earliest productions of this sort, known to exist, are short narrations or ballads, which were probably sung on solemn or festival occasions, recording the deeds and praises of some famed champion of the tribe and country, or perhaps the history of some remarkable victory or signal defeat, calculated to interest the audience by the associations which the song awakens. These poems, of which very few can now be supposed to exist, are not without flashes of genius, but brief, rude, and often obscure, from real antiquity or affected sublimity of diction. The song on the battle of Brunanburgh, preserved in the *Saxon Chronicle*, is a genuine and curious example of this aboriginal style of poetry.

Even at this early period,* there may be observed a distinction betwixt what may be called the *Temporal* and *Spiritual* Romances ; the first destined to the celebration of worldly glory,—the second to recording the deaths of martyrs and the miracles of saints ; both which themes unquestionably met with an almost equally favourable reception from their hearers. But although most nations possess, in their early species of literature, specimens of both kinds of Romance, the proportion of each, as was naturally to have been expected, differs according as the genius of the people amongst whom they occur leaned towards devotion or military enterprise. Thus, of the Saxon specimens of poetry, which manuscripts still afford us, a very large proportion is devotional, amongst which are several examples of the spiritual Romance, but very few indeed of those respecting warfare or chivalry. On the other hand, the Norman language, though rich in examples of

* The religious Romances of *Jehosaphat* and *Barlaam* were composed by John of Damascus in the eighth century.

both kinds of Romances, is particularly abundant in that which relates to battle and warlike adventure. The Christian Saxons had become comparatively pacific, while the Normans were certainly accounted the most martial people in Europe.

However different the spiritual Romance may be from the temporal in scope and tendency, the nature of the two compositions did not otherwise greatly differ. The structure of verse and style of composition was the same; and the induction, even when the most serious subject was undertaken, exactly resembled that with which minstrels introduced their idle tales, and often contained allusions to them. Warton quotes a poem on the Passions, which begins,

" I hereth one lutele tale, that Ich eu wille telle,
As wi wyndeth hit invrite in the godspelle,
Nuz hit nouht of Charlemeyne ne of the Duzpere,
Ac of Criste's thruurynge," &c.

The Temporal Romances, on the other hand, often commenced by such invocations of the Deity, as would only have been in place when a much more solemn subject was to be agitated. The exordium of the Romance of *Ferumbras* may serve as an example of a custom almost universal :

" God in glorie of mightis moost
That all things made in sapience,
By virtue of Word and Holy Gooste,
Giving to men great excellence," &c.

The distresses and dangers which the knight endured for the sake of obtaining earthly fame and his mistress's favour, the saint or martyr was exposed to for the purpose of securing his rank in heaven, and the favour of some beloved and peculiar patron saint. If the earthly champion is in peril from monsters, dragons, and enchantments, the spiritual hero is represented as liable to the constant assaults of the whole invisible world, headed by the ancient dragon himself. If the knight is succoured at need by some favouring fairy of protecting genius, the saint is under the protection not only of the whole heavenly host, but of some one divine patron or patroness who is his especial auxiliary. Lastly, the conclusion of the Romance, which usually assigns to the champion a fair realm, an abundant succession, and a train of happy years, consigns to the martyr his fane and altar upon earth, and in heaven his seat among saints and angels, and his share in a blessed eternity. It remains but to say, that the style and language of these two classes do not greatly differ, and that the composers of both employ the same structure of rhythm and of language, and draw their ideas and their incidents from similar sources; so that, having noticed the existence of the Spiritual Romance, it is unnecessary for the present to prosecute this subject farther.

Another early and natural division of these works of fiction seems to

have arranged them into *Serious* and *Comical*. The former were by far the most numerous, and examples of the latter are in most countries comparatively rare. Such a class, however, existed as proper Romances, even if we hold the comic Romance distinct from the *Contes* and *Fabliaux* of the French, and from such jocular English narratives as the *Wife Lapt in Moril's Skin*, *The Friar and the Boy*, and similar humorous tales: of which the reader will find many examples in Ritson's *Ancient English Poetry*, and in other collections. The scene of these *gestes* being laid in low, or at least in ordinary life, they approach in their nature more nearly to the class of novels, and may, perhaps, be considered as the earliest specimens of that kind of composition. But the proper comic Romance was that in which the high terms and knightly adventures of chivalry were burlesqued, by ascribing them to clowns, or others of a low and mean degree. They formed, as it were, a parody on the serious Romance, to which they bore the same proportion as the anti-masque, studiously filled with grotesque, absurd, and extravagant characters, "entering," as the stage direction usually informs us, "to a confused music," bore to the masque itself, where all was dignified, noble, stately, and harmonious.

An excellent example of the comic Romance is the *Tournament of Tottenham*, printed in Percy's *Reliques*, in which a number of clowns are introduced practising one of those warlike games, which were the exclusive prerogative of the warlike and noble. They are represented making vows to the swan, the peacock, and the ladies; riding a tilt on their clumsy cart-horses, and encountering each other with ploughshares, and flails; while their defensive armour consisted of great wooden bowls and troughs, by way of helmets and cuirasses. The learned editor seems to have thought this singular composition was, like Don Quixote, with which he compares it, a premeditated effort of satire, written to expose the grave and fantastic manners of the serious Romance. This is considering the matter too deeply, and ascribing to the author a more critical purpose than he was probably capable of conceiving. It is more natural to suppose that his only ambition was to raise a laugh, by ascribing to the vulgar the manners and exercises of the noble and valiant; as in the well-known farce of *High Life below Stairs*, the ridicule is not directed against the manners described, but against the menials who affect those that are only befitting their superiors.

The *Hunting of the Hare*, published in the collection formed by the late industrious and accurate Mr. Weber, is a comic romance of the same order. A yeoman informs the inhabitants of a country hamlet that he has found a hare sitting, and invites them to come and course her. They attend, accordingly, with all the curs and mastiffs of the villages, and the unsportsmanlike manner in which the inexperienced

huntsmen and their irregular pack conduct themselves, forms the interest of the piece.

It can hardly be supposed that the satire is directed against the sport of hunting itself; since the whole ridicule arises out of the want of the necessary knowledge of its rules, incident to the ignorance and inexperience of the clowns, who undertook to practise an art peculiar to gentlemen.

The ancient poetry of Scotland furnishes several examples of this ludicrous style of romantic composition; as the *Tournament at the Drum*, and the *Justing of Watson and Barbour*, by Sir David Lindsay. It is probable that these mock encounters were sometimes acted in earnest; at least King James I. is accused of witnessing such practical jests; "sometimes presenting David Droman and Archie Armstrong, the king's fool, on the back of other fools, to tilt at one another till they fell together by the ears."—(Sir Anthony Weldon's *Court of King James*.)

In hastily noticing the various divisions of the Romance, we have in some degree delayed our promised account of its rise and progress; an inquiry which we mean chiefly to confine to the Romance of the middle ages. For although it be true that this species of composition is common to almost all nations, and that even if we deem the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* compositions too dignified by the strain of poetry in which they are composed to bear the name of Metrical Romances; yet we have the Pastoral Romance of *Daphnis and Chloe*, and the Historical Romance of *Theagenes and Chariclea*, which are sufficiently accurate specimens of that style of composition, to which it is probable the *Milesian Fables*, and the Romances of Antonius Diogenes, described by Photius, could they be recovered, would also be found to belong. It is impossible to avoid noticing that the Sybarites, whose luxurious habits seem to have been intellectual, as well as sensual, were peculiarly addicted to the perusal of the Milesian Fables; from which we may conclude that the narratives were not of that severe kind which inspired high thoughts and martial virtues. But there would be little advantage derived from extending our researches into the ages of classical antiquity respecting a class of compositions, which, though they existed then, as in almost every stage of society, were neither so numerous nor of such high repute as to constitute any considerable portion of that literature.

Want of space also may entitle us to dismiss the consideration of the Oriental Romances, unless in so far as in the course of the middle ages they came to furnish materials for enlarging and varying the character of the Romances of knight-errantry. That they existed early, and were highly esteemed both among the Persians and Arabians, has never been disputed; and the most interesting light has been lately thrown on the subject by the publication of *Antar*, one of the most ancient as

well as most rational, if we may use the phrase, of the oriental fictions. The Persian Romance of the *Shah-Nameh* is well known to Europeans by name, and by copious extracts ; and the love-tale of *Méjnoun and Leilah* is also familiar to our ears, if not to our recollections. Many of the fictions in the extraordinary collection of the *Arabian Tales*, approach strictly to the character of Romances of Chivalry ; although in general they must be allowed to exceed the more tame northern fictions in dauntless vivacity of invention, and in their more strong tendency to the marvellous. Several specimens of the comic Romance are also to be found mingled with those which are serious ; and we have the best and most positive authority that the recital of these seductive fictions is at this moment an amusement as fascinating and general among the people of the East, as the perusal of printed Romances and novels among the European public. But a minute investigation into this particular species of Romance would lead us from our present field, already sufficiently extensive for the limits to which our plan confines it.

The European Romance, wherever it arises, and in whatsoever country it begins to be cultivated, had its origin in some part of the real or fabulous history of that country ; and of this we will produce, in the sequel, abundant proofs. But the simple tale of tradition had not passed through many mouths, ere some one, to indulge his own propensity for the wonderful, or to secure by novelty the attention of his audience, augments the meagre chronicle with his own apocryphal inventions. Skirmishes are magnified into great battles ; the champion of a remote age is exaggerated into a sort of demi-god ; and the enemies whom he encountered and subdued are multiplied in number, and magnified in strength, in order to add dignity to his successes against them. Chanted to rhythmical numbers, the songs which celebrate the early valour of the fathers of the tribe become its war-cry in battle, and men march to conflict hymning the praises and the deeds of some real or supposed precursor who had marshalled their fathers in the path of victory. No reader can have forgotten that, when the decisive battle of Hastings commenced, a Norman minstrel, Taillefer, advanced on horseback before the invading host, and gave the signal for onset, by singing the *Song of Roland*, that renowned nephew of Charlemagne, of whom Romance speaks so much, and history so little ; and whose fall, with the chivalry of Charles the Great in the pass of Roncesvalles, has given rise to such clouds of romantic fiction, that its very name has been for ever associated with it. The remarkable passage has been often quoted from the *Brut of Wace*, an Anglo-Norman metrical chronicle.

" Taillefer, qui moult bien chantona
Sur un cheval gi tost alont,
Devant le Duc alont chantant

De Karlemaigne et de Rollant,
Et d'Oliver et des vassals,
Qui morurent en Rencevals."

Which may be thus rendered :

"Taillefer, who sung both well and loud,
Came mounted on a courser proud ;
Before the Duke the minstrel sprung,
And loud of Charles and Roland sung,
Of Oliver and champions mo,
Who died at fatal Roncevaux."

This champion possessed the sleight-of-hand of the juggler, as well as the art of the minstrel. He tossed up his sword in the air, and caught it again as he galloped to the charge, and showed other feats of dexterity. Taillefer slew two Saxon warriors of distinction, and was himself killed by a third. Ritson, with less than his usual severe accuracy, supposed that Taillefer sung some part of a long metrical Romance upon Roland and his history ; but the words *chanson*, *cantilena* and *song*, by which the composition is usually described, seems rather to apply to a brief ballad or national song ; which is also more consonant with our ideas of the time and place where it was chanted.

But neither with these romantic and metrical chronicles did the mind long remain satisfied. More details were demanded, and were liberally added by the invention of those who undertook to cater for the public taste in such matters. The same names of kings and champions, which had first caught the national ear, were still retained, in order to secure attention ; and the same assertions of authenticity, and affected references to real history, were stoutly made, both in the commencement and in the course of the narrative. Each nation, as will presently be seen, came to adopt to itself a cycle of heroes like those of the *Iliad* ; a sort of common property to all minstrels who chose to make use of them, under the condition always that the general character ascribed to each individual hero was preserved with some degree of consistency. Thus, in the Romances of *The Round Table*, Gawain is usually represented as courteous ; Kay as rude and boastful ; Mordred as treacherous, and Sir Launcelot as a true, though a sinful lover, and in all other respects a model of chivalry. Amid the Paladins of Charlemagne, whose cycle may be considered as peculiarly the property of French in opposition to Norman-Anglo Romance, Gan, or Ganelon of Mayence, is as uniformly represented faithless, engaged in intrigues for the destruction of Christianity ; Roland as brave, unsuspicious, devotedly loyal, and somewhat simple in his disposition ; Renaud, or Rinaldo, is painted with all the properties of a borderer, valiant, alert, ingenious, rapacious, and unscrupulous. The same conventional distinctions may be traced in the history of the Nibelung, a composition of Scandinavian origin, which has supplied matter for so

many Teutonic adventurers. Meisteir Hildebrand, Etzel, Theodorick, and the champion Hogan, as well as Crimhelda and the females introduced, have the same individuality of character which is ascribed, in Homer's immortal writings, to the wise Ulysses, the brave but relentless Achilles, his more gentle friend Patroclus, Sarpedon the favourite of the Gods, and Hector the protector of mankind. It was not permitted to the invention of a Greek poet to make Ajax a dwarf, or Teucer a giant, Thersites a hero, or Diomedes a coward ; and it seems to have been under similar restrictions respecting consistency, that the ancient romancers exercised their ingenuity upon the materials supplied them by their predecessors. But, in other respects, the whole store of romantic history and tradition was free to all as a joint stock in trade, on which each had a right to draw as suited his particular purposes. He was at liberty, not only to select a hero out of known and established names which had been the theme of others, but to imagine a new personage of his own pure fancy, and combine him with the heroes of Arthur's table or Charlemagne's Court, in the way which best suited his fancy. He was permitted to excite new wars against those bulwarks of Christendom, invade them with fresh and innumerable hosts of Saracens, reduce them to the last extremity, drive them from their thrones, and lead them into captivity, and again to relieve their persons, and restore their sovereignty, by events and agents totally unknown in their former story.

In the characters thus assigned to the individual personages of romantic fiction, it is possible there might be some slight foundation in remote tradition, as there were also probably some real grounds for the existence of such persons, and perhaps for a very few of the leading circumstances attributed to them. But these realities only exist as the few grains of wheat in the bushel of chaff, incapable of being winnowed out, or cleared from the mass of fiction with which each new romancer had in his turn overwhelmed them. So that Romance, though certainly deriving its first original from the pure font of History, is supplied, during the course of a very few generations, with so many tributes from the imagination, that at length the very name comes to be used to distinguish works of pure fiction.

When so popular a department of poetry has attained this decided character, it becomes time to inquire who were the composers of these numerous, lengthened, and once admired narratives which are called Metrical Romances, and from whence they drew their authority. Both these subjects of discussion have been the source of great controversy among antiquaries ; a class of men who, be it said with their forgiveness, are apt to be both positive and polemical upon the very points which are least susceptible of proof, and which are least valuable if the truth could be ascertained ; and which, therefore, we would gladly have seen handled with more diffidence, and better temper, in proportion to their uncertainty.

The late venerable Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, led the way unwarily to this dire controversy, by ascribing the composition of our ancient heroic songs and metrical legends, in rather too liberal language, to the minstrels, that class of men by whom they were generally recited. This excellent person, to whose memory the lovers of our ancient lyre must always remain so deeply indebted, did not, on publishing his work nearly fifty years ago, see the rigid necessity of observing the utmost and most accurate precision either in his transcripts or his definitions. The study which he wished to introduce was a new one—it was his object to place it before the public in an engaging and interesting form ; and, in consideration of his having obtained this important point, we ought to make every allowance, not only for slight inaccuracies, but for some hasty conclusions, and even exaggerations, with which he was induced to garnish his labour of love. He defined the minstrels, to whose labours he chiefly ascribed the metrical compositions on which he desired to fix the attention of the public, as “an order of men in the middle ages, who subsisted by the arts of poetry and music, and sung to the harp verses composed by themselves or others.”* In a very learned and elegant essay upon the text thus announced, the reverend Prelate in a great measure supported the definition which he had laid down ; although it may be thought that, in the first editions at least, he has been anxious to view the profession of the minstrels on their fairest and most brilliant side ; and to assign to them a higher station in society than a general review of all the passages connected with them will permit us to give to a class of persons, who either lived a vagrant life, dependent on the precarious taste of the public for a hard-earned maintenance, or, at best, were retained as a part of the menial retinue of some haughty baron, and in a great measure identified with his musical band.

The late acute, industrious, and ingenious Mr. Joseph Ritson, whose severe accuracy was connected with an unhappy eagerness and irritability of temper, took advantage of the exaggerations occasionally to be found in the Bishop's *Account of Ancient Minstrelsy*, and assailed him with terms which are anything but courteous. Without finding an excuse, either in the novelty of the studies in which Percy had led the way, or in the vivacity of imagination which he did not himself share, he proceeded to arraign each trivial inaccuracy as a gross fraud, and every deduction which he considered to be erroneous as a wilful untruth, fit to be stigmatised with the broadest appellation by which falsehood can be distinguished. Yet there is so little room for this extreme loss of temper, that upon a recent perusal of both these ingenious essays, we were surprised to find that the reverend editor of the

* *Essay on Ancient Minstrels in England*, prefixed to the first volume of Bishop Percy's *Reliques*.

Reliques, and the accurate antiquary, have differed so very little, as, in essential facts, they appear to have done. Quotations are, indeed, made by both with no sparing hand; and hot arguments, and, on one side at least, hard words, are unsparingly employed; while, as is said to happen in theological polemics, the contest grows warmer, in proportion as the ground concerning which it is carried on is narrower and more insignificant. In reality do not essentially differ.

Ritson is chiefly offended at the sweeping conclusion, in which Percy states the minstrels as subsisting by the arts of poetry and music, and reciting to the harp verses composed by themselves and others. He shows very successfully that this definition is considerably too extensive, and that the term minstrel comprehended, of old, not merely those who recited to the harp or other instrument romances and ballads, but others who were distinguished by their skill in instrumental music only, and, moreover, that jugglers, sleight-of-hand performers, dancers, tumblers, and such like subordinate artists, who were introduced to help away the tedious hours in an ancient feudal castle, were also comprehended under the general term of minstrel. But although he distinctly proves that Percy's definition applied only to one class of the persons termed minstrels, those namely who sung or recited verses, and in many cases of their own composition; the bishop's position remains unassailable, in so far as relates to one general class, and those the most distinguished during the middle ages. All minstrels did not use the harp, and recite or compose romantic poetry; but it cannot be denied that such was the occupation of the most eminent of the order. This Ritson has rather admitted than denied; and the number of quotations which his industry has brought together, rendered such an admission inevitable.

Indeed, the slightest acquaintance with ancient romances of the metrical class, shows us that they were composed for the express purpose of being recited, or, more properly chanted, to some simple tune or cadence for the amusement of a large audience. Our ancestors, as they were circumscribed in knowledge, were also more limited in conversation than their enlightened descendants; and it seems probable, that, in their public festivals, there was great advantage found in the presence of a minstrel, who should recite some popular composition on their favourite subjects of love and war, to prevent those pauses of discourse which sometimes fall heavily on a company, even of the present accomplished age, and to supply an agreeable train of ideas to those guests who had none of their own. It is, therefore, almost constantly insinuated, that the Romance was to be chanted or recited to a large and festive society, and in some part or other of the piece, generally at the opening, there is a request of attention on the part of the performer; and hence, the perpetual "Lythe and listen, lordings free," which in those, or equivalent words, forms the introduction to so many Romances.

As, for example, in the old poem of *Guy and Colbrand*, the minstrel speaks of his own occupation :

"When meat and drink is great plegtye,
Then lords and ladyes still will be,
And sit and solace lythe.
Then it is time for mee to speake,
Of kern knights and kempes greate,
Such carping for to kythe."

Chaucer, also, in his Ryme of Sir Thopas, assigns to the minstrels of his hero's household the same duty of reciting romances of spiritual or secular heroes, for the good knight's pastime while arming himself for battle :

"Do cum," he sayed, "my minestrales,
And jestours for to tellen tales
Anon in min arming,
Of romaunces that ben reales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eke of love-longing."

Not to multiply quotations, we will only add one of some importance, which must have escaped Ritson's researches; for his editorial integrity was such, as rendered him incapable of suppressing evidence on either side of the question. In the old Romance or legend of *True Thomas and the Queen of Elfland*, Thomas the Rhymer, himself a minstrel, is gifted by the Queen of the Faëry with the faculties of music and song. The answer of Thomas is not only conclusive as to the minstrel's custom of recitation, but shows that it was esteemed the highest branch of his profession, and superior as such to mere instrumental music :

"'To harp and carp, Thomas, wheresoever ye gon,
Thomas take the these with the '—
'Harping,' he said, 'ken I non,
For tong is chefe of Mynstralse.'"*

We, therefore, arrive at the legitimate conclusion, that although under the general term minstrels, were comprehended many who probably entertained the public only with instrumental performances, with ribald tales, with jugglery, or farcical representations, yet one class amongst them, and that a numerous one, made poetical recitations their chief if not their exclusive occupation. The memory of these men was, in the general case, the depository of the pieces which they recited; and hence, although a number of their romances still survive, very many more have doubtless fallen into oblivion.

That the minstrels were also the authors of many of these poems, and that they altered and enlarged others, is a matter which can scarce be doubted, when it is proved that they were the ordinary reciters of them. It was as natural for a minstrel to become a poet or composer

* Jamieson's *Popular Ballads*, vol. ii., p. 27.

of romances, as for a player to be a dramatic author, or a musician a composer of music. Whosoever among a class whose trade it was to recite poetry, felt the least degree of poetical enthusiasm in a profession so peculiarly calculated to inspire it, must, from that very impulse, have become an original author, or translator at least: thus giving novelty to his recitations, and acquiring additional profit and fame. Bishop Percy, therefore, states the case fairly in the following passage:—"It can hardly be expected, that we should be able to produce regular and unbroken annals of the minstrel art and its professors, or have sufficient information, whether every minstrel or bard composed himself, or only repeated the songs he chanted. Some probably did the one, and some the other; and it would have been wonderful indeed, if men, whose peculiar profession it was, and who devoted their time and talents to entertain their hearers with poetical compositions, were peculiarly deprived of all poetical genius themselves, and had been under a physical incapacity of composing those common popular rhymes, which were the usual subjects of their recitation."* While, however, we acquiesce in the proposition, that the minstrels composed many, perhaps the greater part, of the metrical Romances which they sung, it is evident they were frequently assisted in the task by others, who, though not belonging to this profession, were prompted by leisure and inclination to enter upon the literary or poetical department as amateurs. These very often belonged to the clerical profession, amongst whom relaxation of discipline, abundance of spare time, and impatience of the routine of ceremonious duties, often led individuals into worse occupations than the listening to or composing metrical Romances. It was in vain that both the poems and the minstrels who recited them, were, by statute, debarred from entering the more rigid monasteries. Both found their way frequently to the refectory, and were made more welcome than brethren of their own profession; as we may learn from a memorable *Gest*, in which two poor travelling priests, who had been received into a monastery with acclamation, under the mistaken idea of their being minstrels, are turned out in disgrace, when it is discovered that they were indeed capable of furnishing spiritual instruction, but understood none of the entertaining arts with which the hospitality of their convent might have been repaid by itinerant bards.

Nay, besides a truant disposition to a forbidden task, many of the grave authors may have alleged in their own defence, that the connexion between history and Romance was not in their day entirely dissolved. Some eminent men exercised themselves in both kinds of composition;

* *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels*, p. 30.—Another authority of ancient date, the *Chronicle* of Bertrand Guesclin, distinctly attributes the most renowned romances to the composition of the minstrels by whom they were sung. As the passage will be afterwards more fully quoted, we must here only say, that after enumerating Arthur, Lancelot, Godfrey, Roland, and other champions, he sums up his account of them as being the heroes

"De quoi cils minstriers font les nobles romans."

as, for example, Maitre Wace, a canon of Caen, in Normandy, who, besides the metrical chronicle of *La Brut*, containing the earliest history of England, and other historical legends, wrote, in 1155, the *Roman de Chevalier de Lyon*, probably the same translated under the title of *Ywain and Gawain*. Lambert li Cors, and Benoit de Saint-Maur, seem both to have been of the clerical order; and, perhaps, Chretien de Troyes, a most voluminous author of Romance, was of the same profession. Indeed, the extreme length of many Romances being much greater than any minstrel could undertake to sing at one or even many sittings, may induce us to refer them to men of a more sedentary occupation than those wandering poets. The religious Romances were, in all probability, the works of such churchmen as might wish to reconcile an agreeable occupation with their religious profession. All which circumstances must be received as exceptions from the general proposition, that the Romances in metre were the composition of the minstrels by whom they were recited or sung, though they must still leave Percy's proposition to a certain extent-unimpeached.

To explain the history of Romance, it is necessary to digress a little farther concerning the condition of the minstrels by whom these compositions were often made, and, generally speaking, preserved and recited. And here it must be confessed, that the venerable prelate has, perhaps, suffered his love of antiquity, and his desire to ennoble the productions of the middle ages, a little to overcolour the importance and respectability of the minstrel tribe; although his opponent Ritson has, on the other hand, seized on all circumstances and inferences which could be adduced to prove the degradation of the minstrel character, without attending to the particulars by which these depreciating circumstances were qualified. In fact, neither of these excellent antiquaries has cast a general or philosophic glance on the necessary condition of a set of men, who were by profession the instruments of the pleasure of others during a period of society such as was presented in the middle ages.

In a very early period of civilization, ere the division of ranks had been generally adopted, and while each tribe may be yet considered as one great family, and the nation as a union of such independent tribes, the poetical art, so nearly allied to that of oratory or persuasion, is found to ascertain to its professors a very high rank. Poets are the historians and often the priests of the tribe. Their command of language, then in its infancy, excites not merely pleasure, but enthusiasm and admiration. When separated into a distinct class, as was the case with the Celtic Bards, and, perhaps, with the Skalds of Scandinavia, they rank high in the scale of society, and we not only find kings and nobles listening to them with admiration, but emulous of their art, and desirous to be enrolled among their numbers. Several of the most renowned northern kings and champions, valued themselves

as much upon their powers of poetry as on their martial exploits; and of the Welsh princes, the Irish kings, and the Highland chiefs of Scotland, very many practised the arts of poetry and music. Llywarch Hen was a prince of the Cymraig,—Brian Boromhe, a harper and a musician,—and, without resorting to the questionable authenticity of Ossian, several instances of the same kind might be produced in the Highlands.

But, in process of time, when the classes of society come to assume their usual gradation with respect to each other, the rank of professional poets is uniformly found to sink gradually in the scale, along with that of all others whose trade it is to contribute to mere amusement. The mere professional poet, like the player or the musician, becomes the companion and soother only of idle and convivial hours; his presence would be unbecoming on occasions of gravity and importance; and his art is accounted at best an amusing but useless luxury. Although the intellectual pleasure derived from poetry, or from the exhibition of the drama, be of a different and much higher class than that derived from the accordance of sounds, or from the exhibition of feats of dexterity, still it will be found, that the opinions and often the laws of society, while individuals of these classes are cherished and held in the highest estimation, has degraded the professions themselves among its idle, dissolute, and useless appendages. Although it may be accounted ungrateful in mankind thus to reward the instruments of their highest enjoyments, yet some justification is usually to be drawn from the manners of the classes who were thus lowered in public opinion. It must be remembered that, as professors of this joyous science, as it was called, the minstrels stood in direct opposition to the more severe part of the Catholics, and to the monks in particular, whose vows bound them to practise virtues of the ascetic order, and to look upon everything as profane which was connected with mere worldly pleasure. The manners of the minstrels themselves gave but too much room for clerical censure. They were the usual assistants at scenes, not merely of conviviality, but of license; and, as the companions and encouragers of revelling and excess, they became contemptible in the eyes, not only of the aged and the serious, but of the libertine himself, when his debauch palled on his recollection. The minstrels, no doubt, like their brethren of the stage, sought an apology in the corrupted taste and manners of their audience, with which they were obliged to comply, under the true, but melancholy condition, that

“They who live to please must please to live.”

But this very necessity, rendered more degrading by their increasing numbers and decreasing reputation, only accelerated the total downfall of their order, and the general discredit and neglect into which they had fallen. The statute of the 39th Queen Elizabeth, passed at the close of the sixteenth century, ranks those dishonoured sons of

song among rogues and vagabonds, and appoints them to be punished as such ; and the occupation, though a vestige of it was long retained in the habits of travelling ballad-singers and musicians, sunk into total neglect and contempt. Of this we shall have to speak hereafter ; our business being at present with those romances which, while still in the zenith of their reputation, were the means by which the minstrels, at least the better and higher class among them, recommended themselves to the favour of their noble patrons, and of the audiences whom they addressed.

It may be presumed that, although the class of minstrels, like all who merely depend upon gratifying the public, carried in their very occupation the evils which first infected, and finally altogether depraved, their reputation ; yet, in the earlier ages, their duties were more honourably estimated, and some attempts were made to introduce into their motley body the character of a regular establishment, subjected to discipline and subordination. Several individuals, both of France and England, bore the title of King of Minstrels, and were invested probably with some authority over the others. The Serjeant of Minstrels is also mentioned ; and Edward IV. seems to have attempted to form a Guild or exclusive Corporation of Minstrels. John of Gaunt, at an earlier period, established (between jest and earnest, perhaps) a Court Baron of Minstrels, to be held at Tilbury. There is no reason, however, to suppose that the influence of their establishments went far in restraining the license of a body of artists so unruly as well as numerous.

It is not, indeed, surprising that individuals, whose talents in the arts of music or of the stage rise to the highest order, should, in a special degree, attain the regard and affection of the powerful, acquire wealth, and rise to consideration ; for, in such professions, very high prizes are assigned to pre-eminent excellence ; while ordinary or inferior practisers of the same art may be said to draw in the lottery something more than a mere blank. Garrick, in his chariot, and whose company was courted for his wit and talent, was, after all, by profession, the same with the unfortunate stroller, whom the British laws condemn as a vagabond, and to whose dead body other countries refuse even the last rites of Christianity. In the same manner it is easy to suppose that, when, in compliance with the taste of their age, monarchs entertained their domestic minstrels,* those persons might be admitted to the most flattering intimacy with their royal masters ; sleep within the royal chamber,† amass considerable fortunes, found hospitals,‡ and

* Berdic (*Regis Jocolator*), the jongleur or minstrel of William the Conqueror, had, as appears from the Doomesday record, three vills and five caracates of land in Gloucestershire without rent. Henry I. had a minstrel called Galfrid, who received an annuity from the Abbey of Hyde.

† A minstrel of Edward I., during that prince's expedition to the Holy Land, slept within his tent, and came to his assistance when an attempt was made to assassinate him.

‡ The Priory and Hospital of Saint Bartholomew, in London was founded in the reign of Henry I. by Royer, or Raher, a minstrel of that prince.

receive rewards singularly over-proportioned to the perquisites of the graver professions,* and even practise, in company with their royal masters, the pleasing arts of poetry and music, which all are so desirous of attaining; † whilst, at the same time, those who ranked lower in the same profession were struggling with difficulty to gain a precarious subsistence, and incurring all the disgrace usually attached to a vagabond life and a dubious character. In the fine arts particularly excellence is demanded, and mere mediocrity is held contemptible; and, while the favour with which the former is loaded sometimes seems disproportioned to the utility of the art itself, nothing can exceed the scorn poured out on those who expose themselves by undertaking arts which they are unable to practise with success. Self-conceit, however, love of an idle life, and a variety of combined motives, never fail to recruit the lower orders of such idle professions with individuals, by whose performances, and often by their private characters, the art which they have rashly adopted can only be discredited, without any corresponding advantage to themselves. It is not, therefore, surprising that, while such distinguished examples of the contrary appeared amongst individuals, the whole body of minstrels, with the Romances which they composed and sung, should be reprobated by graver historians in such severe terms as often occur in the monkish chronicles of the day.

Respecting the style of their composition, Du Cange informs us that the minstrels sometimes devoted their strains to flatter the great, and sing the praises of those princes by whom they were protected; while he owns, at the same time, that they often recommended to their hearers the path of virtue and nobleness, and pointed out the pursuits by which the heroes of Romance had rendered themselves renowned in song.‡ He quotes from the romance of *Bertrand Guesclin*, the injunc-

* In 1441, the monks of Maxlock, near Coventry, paid a donation of four shillings to the minstrels of Lord Clinton for songs, harping, and other exhibitions, while, to a doctor who preached before the community in the same year, they assigned only sixpence.

† The noted anecdote of Blondel and his royal master, Richard Cœur de Lion, will occur to every reader.

‡ MINISTELLI dicti præsertim Scurræ, mimi, joculatores, quos etiamnum vulgo *Menestreux* vel *Menestriers*, appellamus.—Porro ejusmodi scurrarum erat Principes non suis duntaxat ludicris oblectare, sed et eorum aures variis avorum, adeoque ipsorum Principum laudibus, non sine assentatione, cum cantilenis et iusculis instrumentis, demulcere.—Interdum etiam virorum insignium et heroum gesta, aut explicata et jucunda narratione commemorabant, aut suavi vocis infectione, fidibusque decantabant, quo sic dominorum, cæterorumque qui his intererant ludicris, nobilium animos ad virtutem capessendam et summorum virorum imitationem accenderent: quod fuit olim apud Gallos Bardorum ministerium, ut auctor est Tacitus. Neque enim alios à *Ministellis*, veterum Gallorum *Bardos* fuisse pluribus probat Henricus Valesius ad 15. Ammiani.—*Chronicon* Bertrandi Guesclini:

*Qui veut avoir renom des bons et des vaillans
Il doit aler souvent à la pluie et au champ,
Et estre en la bataille, ainsy que fu Rollans,
Les quatre fils Haimon et Charlon li plus grans,
Li Dus Lions de Bourges, et Guion de Connans,
Perceval li Galois, Lancelot et Tristans,
Alexandres, Artus, Godefroy li sachans,
De quoy cils Menestriers font les nobles Romans.*

tion on those who would rise to fame in arms to copy the valiant acts of the Paladins of Charles, and the Knights of the Round Table, narrated in Romances ; it cannot be denied that those high tales in which the virtues of generosity, bravery, devotion to his mistress, and zeal for the Catholic religion, were carried to the greatest height of romantic perfection in the character of the hero, united with the scenes passing around them, were of the utmost importance in affecting the character of the age. The fabulous knights of romance were so completely identified with those of real history, that graver historians quote the actions of the former in illustration of, and as a corollary to, the real events which they narrate.* The virtues recommended in romance were, however, only of that overstrained and extravagant cast which consisted with the spirit of chivalry. Great bodily strength, and perfection in all martial exercises, was the universal accomplishment inalienable from the character of the hero, and which each romancer had it in his power to confer. It was also easily in the composer's power to devise dangers, and to free his hero from them by the exertion of valour equally extravagant. But it was more difficult to frame a story which should illustrate the manners as well as the feats of chivalry ; or to devise the means of evincing that devotion to duty, and that disinterested desire to sacrifice all to faith and honour ; that noble spirit of achievement which laboured for others more than itself—which form, perhaps, the fairest side of the system under which the noble youths of the middle ages were trained up. The sentiments of chivalry, as we have explained in our article on that subject, were founded on the most pure and honourable principles, but unfortunately carried into hyperbole and extravagance ; until their religion approached to fanaticism, valour to frenzy, their ideas of honour to absurdity, their spirit of enterprise to extravagance, and their respect for the female sex to a sort of idolatry. All those extravagant feelings, which really existed in the society of the middle ages, were magnified and exaggerated by the writers and reciters of Romance ; and these, given as resemblances of actual manners, became, in their turn, the glass by which the youth of the age dressed themselves ; while the spirit of Chivalry and Romance thus gradually threw light upon and enhanced each other.

The Romances, therefore, exhibited the same system of manners which existed in the nobles of the age. The character of a true son of chivalry was raised to such a pitch of ideal and impossible perfection, that those who emulated such renown were usually contented to stop far short of the mark. The most adventurous and unshaken valour, a mind capable of the highest flights of romantic generosity, a heart

* Barbour, the Scottish historian, censures a Highland chief, when, in commending the prowess of Bruce in battle, he likened him to the Celtic hero Fin MacCoul, and says, he might in more mannerly fashion have compared him to Guadifer, a champion celebrated in the *Romance of Alexander*.

which was devoted to the will of some fair idol, on whom his deeds were to reflect glory, and whose love was to reward all his toils,—these were attributes which all aspired to exhibit who sought to rank high in the annals of chivalry; and such were the virtues which the minstrels celebrated. But, like the temper of a tamed lion, the fierce and dissolute spirit of the age often showed itself through the fair varnish of this artificial system of manners. The valour of the hero was often stained by acts of cruelty, or freaks of rash desperation; his courtesy and munificence became solemn foppery and wild profusion; his love to his lady often demanded and received a requital inconsistent with the honour of the object; and those who affected to found their attachment on the purest and most delicate metaphysical principles, carried on their actual intercourse with a license altogether inconsistent with their sublime pretensions. Such were the real manners of the middle ages, and we find them so depicted in these ancient legends.

So high was the national excitation in consequence of the romantic atmosphere in which they seemed to breathe, that the knights and squires of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries imitated the wildest and most extravagant emprises of the heroes of Romance; and, like them, took on themselves the most extraordinary adventures, to show their own gallantry, and do most honour to the ladies of their hearts. The females of rank, erected into a species of goddesses in public, and often degraded as much below their proper dignity in more private intercourse, equalled in their extravagances the youth of the other sex. A singular picture is given by Knyghton of the damsels-errant who attended upon the solemn festivals of chivalry, in quest, it may reasonably be supposed, of such adventures as are very likely to be met with by such females as think proper to seek them. "These tournaments are attended by many ladies of the first rank and greatest beauty, but not always of the most untainted reputation. These ladies are dressed in parti-coloured tunics, one-half of one colour, and the other half of another; their lirripipes, or tippets, are very short; their caps remarkably little, and wrapt about their heads with cords; their girdles and pouches are ornamented with gold and silver; and they wear short swords, called *daggers*, before them, a little below their navels; they are mounted on the finest horses, with the richest furniture. Thus equipped, they ride from place to place in quest of tournaments, by which they dissipate their fortunes, and sometimes ruin their reputation."—(Knyghton, quoted in Henry's *History*, vol. viii., p. 402.)

The minstrels, or those who aided them in the composition of the romances, which it was their profession to recite, roused to rivalry by the unceasing demand for their compositions, endeavoured emulously to render them more attractive by subjects of new and varied interest, or by marvellous incidents which their predecessors were strangers to. Much labour has been bestowed, somewhat unprofitably, in endeavour-

ing to ascertain the sources from which they drew the embellishments of their tales, when the hearers began to be tired of the unvaried recital of battle and tournament which had satisfied the simplicity of a former age. Percy has contended for the Northern *Sagas* as the unquestionable origin of the Romance of the middle ages; Warton conceived that the *Oriental fables* borrowed by those minstrels who visited Spain, or who in great numbers attended the crusades, gave the principal distinctive colouring to those remarkable compositions; and a later system, patronised by later authors, has derived them in a great measure from the *Fragments of Classical Superstition* which continued to be preserved after the fall of the Roman Empire. All those systems seem to be inaccurate, in so far as they have been adopted, exclusively of each other, and of the general proposition, That fables of a nature similar to the Romances of Chivalry, modified according to manners and the state of society, must necessarily be invented in every part of the world, for the same reason that grass grows upon the surface of the soil in every climate and every country. "In reality," says Mr. Southey, who has treated this subject with his usual ability, "mythological and romantic tales are current among all savages of whom we have any full account: for man has his intellectual as well as his bodily appetites, and these things are the food of his imagination and faith. They are found wherever there is language and discourse of reason, in other words, wherever there is man. And in similar stages of civilization, or states of society, the fictions of different people will bear a corresponding resemblance, notwithstanding the differences of time and scene."^{*}

To this it may be added, that the usual appearances and productions of nature offer to the fancy, in every part of the world, the same means of diversifying fictitious narrative by the introduction of prodigies. If in any Romance we encounter the description of an elephant, we may reasonably conclude that a phenomenon unknown in Europe, must have been borrowed from the East; but whoever has seen a serpent and a bird, may easily aggravate the terrors of the former by conferring on a fictitious monster the wings of the latter; and whoever has seen or heard of a wolf, or lion, and an eagle, may, by a similar exertion of invention, imagine a griffin or hippogriff. It is imputing great poverty to the human imagination, to suppose that the *speciosa miracula*, which are found to exist in different parts of the world, must necessarily be derived from some common source; and perhaps we should not err more grossly in supposing, that the various kinds of boats, skiffs, and rafts, upon which men have dared the ocean on so many various shores, have been all originally derived from the vessel of the Argonauts.

On the other hand, there are various romantic incidents and inventions of a nature so peculiar that we may boldly, and at once, refer

^{*} Preface to Southey's edition of the *Morte D'Arthur*, vol. ii., Lond. 1817.

them to some particular and special origin. The tale of *Flora and Blanchefleur*, for example, could only be invented in the East, where the scene is laid, and the manners of which are observed with some accuracy. That of *Orfeo and Heroditis*, on the contrary, is the classical history of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the Gothic machinery of the Elves or Fairies, substituted for the infernal regions. But notwithstanding these and many other instances, in which the subjects or leading incidents of Romance can be distinctly traced to British or Armoric traditions, to the tales and history of Classic Antiquity, to the wild fables and rich imagery of Arabia, or to those darker and sterner themes which were first treated of by the Skalds of the North, it would be assuming greatly too much upon such grounds, to ascribe the derivation of romantic fiction, exclusively to any one of these sources. In fact, the foundation of these fables lies deep in human nature, and the superstructures have been imitated from various authorities by those who, living by the pleasure which their lays of chivalry afforded to their audience, were especially anxious to recommend them by novelty of every kind; and were undoubtedly highly gratified when the report of travellers, or pilgrims, or perhaps their own intercourse with minstrels of other nations, enabled them to vary their usual narrations with circumstances yet unheard in bower and hall. Romance, therefore, was like a compound metal, derived from various mines, and in the different specimens of which one metal or other was alternately predominant; and, viewed in this light, the ingenious theories of those learned antiquaries, who have endeavoured to seek the origin of this style of fiction in one of these sources alone, to the exclusion of all others, seem as vain as that of travellers affecting to trace the proper head of the Nile to various different springs, all of which are allowed to be accessory to form the full majesty of his current.

As the fashion of all things passes away, the Metrical Romances began gradually to decline in public estimation, probably on account of the depreciated character of the minstrels by whom they were recited. Tradition, says Ritson, is an alchymy, which converts gold into lead; and there is little doubt, that, in passing from mouth to mouth, and from age to age, the most approved Metrical Romances became gradually corrupted by the defect of memory of some reciters, and the interpolations of others; since few comparatively can be supposed to have had recourse to the manuscripts in which some have been preserved. Neither were the reciters in the latter, as in the former times, supplied with new productions of interest and merit. The composition of the Metrical Romance was gradually abandoned to persons of an inferior class. The art of stringing together in loose verse a number of unconnected adventures, was too easy not to be practised by many who only succeeded to such a degree as was discreditable to the art, by showing that mere mediocrity was sufficient to exercise it. And the

licentious character, as well as those who, under the various names of glee-men, minstrels, and the like, traversed the country, and subsisted by this idle trade, brought themselves and their occupation into still greater contempt and disregard. With them, the long recitations, formerly made at the tables of the great, were gradually banished into more vulgar society.

But though the form of these narratives underwent a change of fashion, the appetite for the fictions themselves continued as ardent as ever; and the Prose Romances which succeeded, and finally superseded those composed in verse, had a large and permanent share of popularity. This was, no doubt, in a great degree owing to the important invention of printing, which has so much contributed to alter the destinies of the world. The Metrical Romances, though in some instances sent to the press, were not very fit to be published in this form. The dull amplifications, which passed well enough in the course of a half-heard recitation, became intolerable when subjected to the eye; and the public taste gradually growing more fastidious as the language became more copious, and the system of manners more complicated, graces of style and variety of sentiment were demanded instead of a naked and unadorned tale of wonders. The authors of the Prose Romance endeavoured, to the best of their skill, to satisfy this newly-awakened and more refined taste. They used, indeed, the same sources of romantic history which had been resorted to by their metrical predecessors; and Arthur, Charlemagne, and all their chivalry, were as much celebrated in prose as ever they had been in poetic narrative. But the new candidates for public favour pretended to have recourse to sources of authentic information, to which their metrical predecessors had no access. They refer almost always to Latin and sometimes to Greek originals, which certainly had no existence; and there is little doubt that the venerable names of the alleged authors are invented, as well as the supposed originals from which they are said to have translated their narratives. The following account of the discovery of *La tres elegante delieux melliflue et tres plaisante Hystoire du tres noble Roy Perceforest* (printed at Paris in 1528 by Galliot du Pré,) may serve to show that modern authors were not the first who invented the popular mode of introducing their works to the world as the contents of a newly-discovered manuscript. In the abridgement to which we are limited, we can give but a faint picture of the minuteness with which the author announces his pretended discovery, and which forms an admirable example of the lie with a circumstance. In the year 1286, Count William of Hainault had, it is averred, crossed the seas in order to be present at the nuptials of Edward, and in the course of a tour through Britain, was hospitably entertained at an abbey situated on the banks of the Humber, and termed, it seems, Burtimer, because founded by a certain Burtimericus, a monarch of whom our annals are

silent, but who had gained, in that place, a victory over the heathens of Germany. Here a cabinet, which was enclosed in a private recess, had been lately discovered within the massive walls of an ancient tower, and was found to contain a Grecian manuscript, along with a royal crown. The abbot had sent the latter to King Edward, and the Count of Hainault with difficulty obtained possession of the manuscript. He had it rendered from Greek into Latin by a monk of the abbey of Saint Landelain, and from that language it is said to have been translated into French by the author, who gives it to the world in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and for the edification of nobleness and chivalry.

By such details, the authors of the Prose Romances endeavoured to obtain for their works a credit for authenticity which had been denied to the rhythmical legends. But in this particular they did great injustice to their contemned predecessors, whose reputations they murdered in order to rob them with impunity. Whatever fragments or shadowings of true history may yet remain hidden under the mass of accumulated fable, which had been heaped on them during successive ages, must undoubtedly be sought in the Metrical Romances; and, according to the view of the subject which we have already given, the more the works approach in point of antiquity to the period where the story is laid, the more are we likely to find those historical traditions in something approaching to an authentic state. But those who wrote under the imaginary names of Rusticien de Puise, Robert de Borron, and the like, usually seized upon the subject of some old minstrel; and, recomposing the whole narrative after their own fashion, with additional characters and adventures, totally obliterated in that operation any shades which remained of the first, and probably authentic, tradition, which was the original source of the elaborate fiction. Amplification was especially employed by the prose Romancers, who, having once got hold of a subject, seem never to have parted with it until their power of invention was completely exhausted. The Metrical Romances, in some instances, indeed, ran to great length, but were much exceeded in that particular by the folios which were written on the same or similar topics by their prose successors. Probably the latter judiciously reflected, that a book which addresses itself only to the eyes, may be laid aside when it becomes tiresome to the reader; whereas it may not always have been so easy to stop the minstrel in the full career of his metrical declamation.

Who, then, the reader may be disposed to inquire, can have been the real authors of those prolix works, who, shrouding themselves under borrowed names, derive no renown from their labours, if successful, and who, certainly, in the infant state of the press, were not rewarded with any emolument? This question cannot, perhaps, be very satisfactorily answered; but we may reasonably suspect that the long hours of leisure which the cloister permitted to its votaries, were

often passed away in this manner ; and the conjecture is rendered more probable, when it is observed that matters are introduced into those works which have an especial connexion with sacred history, and with the traditions of the Church. Thus, in the curious Romance of *Huon de Bourdeaux*, a sort of second part is added to that delightful history, in which the hero visits the terrestrial paradise, encounters the first murderer Cain, in the performance of his penance, with more matter to the same purpose, not likely to occur to the imagination of a layman ; besides that the laity of the period were, in general, too busy and too ignorant to engage in literary tasks of any kind. The mystical portion of the Romance of the *Round Table* seems derived from the same source. It may also be mentioned, that the audacious and sometimes blasphemous assertions, which claimed for these fictions the credit due even to the inspired writings themselves, were likely to originate amongst Roman Catholic churchmen, who were but too familiar with such forgeries for the purpose of authenticating the legends of their superstition. One almost incredible instance of this impious species of imposture occurs in the history of the *Saint Graal*, which curious mixture of mysticism and Chivalry is ascribed by the unfearing and unblushing writer to the Second Person of the Trinity.

Churchmen, however, were by no means the only authors of these legends, although the *Sires Clercs*, as they were sometimes termed, who were accounted the chroniclers of the times in which they lived, were usually in orders ; and although it appears that it was upon them that the commands of the sovereigns whom they served often imposed the task of producing new Romances, under the usual disguise of ancient chronicles translated from the learned languages, or otherwise collected from the ruins of antiquity. As education became improved, and knowledge began to be more generally diffused, individuals among the laity, and those of no mean rank, began to feel the necessity, as it may be called, of putting into a permanent form the "thick coming fancies" which gleam along the imagination of men-of genius. Sir Thomas Malory, who compiled the *Morte d'Arthur* from French originals, was a person of honour and worship ; and Lord Berners, the excellent translator of Froissart, and author of a Romance called *The Chevalier de la Cygne*, is an illustrious example that a nobleman of high estimation did not think his time misemployed on this species of composition. Some literary fame must therefore have attended these efforts ; and perhaps less eminent authors might, in the later ages, receive some pecuniary advantages. The translator of *Perceforest*, formerly mentioned, who appears to have been an Englishman or Fleming, in his address to the warlike and invincible nobility of France, holds the language of a professional author, who expected some advantage besides that of pleasing those whom he addressed ; and who expresses proportional gratitude for the favourable reception of his

former feeble attempts to please them. It is possible, therefore, that the publishers, these lions of literature, had begun already to admit the authors into some share of their earnings. Other printers, like the venerable Caxton, compiled themselves, or translated from other languages, the Romances which they sent to the press ; thus uniting in their own persons the three separate departments of author, printer, and publisher.

The Prose Romances did not, in the general conduct of the story, where digressions are heaped on digressions, without the least respect to the principal narrative, greatly differ from that of their metrical predecessors, being to the full as tedious and inartificial ; nay, more so, in proportion as the new Romances were longer than the old. In the transference from verse to prose, and the amplification which the scenes underwent in the process, many strong, forcible, and energetic touches of the original author have been weakened, or altogether lost ; and the reader misses with regret some of the redeeming bursts of rude poetry which, in the Metrical Romance, makes amends for many hundred lines of bald and rude versification. But, on the other hand, the Prose Romances were written for a more advanced stage of society, and by authors whose language was much more copious, and who certainly belonged to a more educated class than the ancient minstrels. Men were no longer satisfied with hearing of hard battles and direful wounds ; they demanded, at the hands of those who professed to entertain them, some insight into nature, or at least into manners ; some description of external scenery, and a greater regard to probability, both in respect of the characters which are introduced, and the events which are narrated. These new demands the Prose Romances endeavoured to supply to the best of their power. There was some attention shown to relieve their story, by the introduction of new characters, and to illustrate these personages by characteristic dialogue. The lovers conversed with each other in the terms of metaphysical gallantry, which were used in real life ; and, from being a mere rhapsody of warlike feats, the Romance began to assume the nobler and more artificial form of a picture of manners. It is in the prose folios of *Lancelot du Lac*, *Perceforest*, and others, that antiquaries find recorded the most exact accounts of fights, tournaments, feasts, and other magnificent displays of chivalric splendour ; and as they descend into more minute description than the historians of the time thought worthy of their pains, they are a mine from which the painful student may extract much valuable information. This, however, is not the full extent of their merit. These ancient books, amid many pages of dull repetition and uninteresting dialect, and notwithstanding the languor of an inartificial, protracted, and confused story, exhibit from time to time passages of deep interest and situations of much novelty, as well as specimens of spirited and masculine writing. The general reader, who

dreads the labour of winnowing out these valuable passages from the sterile chaff through which they are scattered, will receive an excellent idea of the beauties and defects of the Romance from Tressau's *Corps & Extraits de Romans de Chevalrie*, from Mr. Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Romances*, and from Mr. Dunlop's *History of Fiction*.

These works continued to furnish the amusement of the most polished courts in Europe so long as the manners and habits of Chivalry continued to animate them. Even the sagacious Catherine of Medicis considered the Romance of *Perceforest* as the work best qualified to form the manners and amuse the leisure of a young prince; since she impressed on Charles IX. the necessity of studying it with attention. But by degrees the progress of new opinions in religion, the promulgation of a stricter code of morality, together with the important and animating discussions which began to be carried on by means of the press, diverted the public attention from these antiquated legends. The Protestants of England, and the Huguenots of France, were rigorous in their censure of books of Chivalry, in proportion as they had been patronised formerly under the Catholic system: perhaps because they helped to arrest men's thoughts from more serious subjects of occupation. The learned Ascham thus inveighs against the Romance of *Morte d'Arthur*, and at the same time acquaints us with its having passed out of fashion:

"In our forefathers' tyme, when Papistrie, as a standyng poole, covered and overflowed all *Englande*, fewe bookes were read in our tongue, savyng certaine bookes of chivalrie, as they said for passtime and pleasure; which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle monks, or wanton chanons. As, for example, *La Morte d'Arthur*, the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poyntes, in open manslaughter, and bold bawdrye: in which booke they are counted the noblest knights that do kill most men without any quarrel, and commit fowlest adultries by subtlest shifts: as Sir *Launcelote*, with the wife of King *Arthur* his master; Sir *Tristram*, with the wife of King *Marke* his uncle; Sir *Lamerocke*, with the wife of King *Lote*, that was his own aunt. This is goode stuffe for wise men to laughe at, or honest men to take pleasure at: yet I know, when God's Bible was banished the court, and *La Morte d'Arthur* received into the prince's chamber."*

The brave and religious La Noue is not more favourable to the perusal of Romances than the learned Ascham; attributing to the public taste for these compositions the decay of morality among the French nobility.

"The ancient fables whose reliques doe yet remaine, namely, *Lancelot of the Lake*, *Perceforest*, *Tristram*, *Giron the Courteous*, and such others, doe beare witnessse of this olde vanitie; herewith were men fed

* *Works of Roger Ascham*, p. 254. 4to. edition.

for the space of 500 yeeres, until our language growing more polished, and our mindes more ticklish, they were driven to invent some nouelties wherewith to delight us. Thus came y^e bookes of *Amadis* into light among us in this last age. But to say y^e truth, *Spaine* bred thē, and *France* new clothed thē in gay garments: In y^e daies of *Henrie the Second* did they beare chieftest sway, and I think if any man would then have reproved thē, he should have bene spit at, because they were of themselves playfellowes and maintainers to a great sort of persons; whereof some, after they had learned to amize in speech, their teeth watered, so desirous were they even to taste of some small morsels of the delicacies therein most livelie and naturally represented.*

The gallant Maréchal proceeds at considerable length to refute the arguments of those who contended that these books were intended as a spur to the practice of arms and honourable exercises amongst youth, and labours hard to show that they teach dishonest practices both in love and in arms. It is impossible to suppress a smile when we find such an author as La Noue denouncing the introduction of spells, witchcrafts and enchantments into these volumes, not because such themes are absurd and nonsensical, but because the representing such beneficent enchanters as Alquife and Urgunda, is, in fact, a vindication of those who traffic with the powers of darkness; and because those who love to read about sorceries and enchantments become, by degrees, familiarized with those devilish mysteries, and may at length be induced to have recourse to them in good earnest.

The Romances of Chivalry did not, however, sink into disrepute under the stern rebuke of religious puritans or severe moralists, but became gradually neglected as the customs of Chivalry itself fell into disregard; when of course the books which breathed its spirit, and were written under its influence, ceased to produce any impression on the public mind, and, superseded by better models of composition, and overwhelmed with the ridicule of Cervantes, sunk by degrees into utter contempt and oblivion.

Other works of amusement, of the same general class, succeeded the proper Romance of Chivalry. Of these we shall take some notice hereafter; since we must here close our general view of the history of Romance, and proceed briefly to give some account of those peculiar to the various European nations.

II. We can here but briefly touch upon a subject of great interest and curiosity, the peculiar character and tone, namely, which the Romance of Chivalry received from the manners and early history of the nations among whom it is found to exist; and the corresponding question, in what degree each appears to have borrowed from other

* *The Politicke and Militaire Discourses* of the Lord de la Noue, pp. 87, 88. 4to., Lond. 1587.

countries the themes of their own minstrels, or to have made use of materials common to the whole.

Scandinavia, as was to be expected, may be safely considered as the richest country in Europe in ancient tales corresponding with the character of Romance ; sometimes composed entirely in poetry or rhythm, sometimes in prose, and much more frequently in a mixture of prose, narrative, and lyrical effusions. Their well-known Skalds, or bards, held a high rank in their courts and councils. The character of a good poet was scarce second to that of a gallant leader, and many of the most celebrated champions ambitiously endeavoured to unite both in their own persons. Their earlier sagas, or tales, approach to the credit of real history, and were unquestionably meant as such, though, as usual at an early period, debased by the intermixture of those *speciosa miracula*, which the love of the wonderful early introduces into the annals of an infant country. There are, however, very many of the sagas, indeed by far the greater number of those now known to exist, which must be considered as falling rather under the class of fictitious than of real narratives ; and which, therefore, belong to our present subject of inquiry. The *Omeyinger Saga*, the *Heimskringla*, the *Saga* of Olaf Triggwason, the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, and several others, may be considered as historical : whilst the numerous narratives referring to the history of the Nibilungen and Volsungen are as imaginary as the Romances which treat of King Arthur and of Charlemagne. These singular compositions, short, abrupt, and concise in expression, full of bold and even extravagant metaphor, exhibiting many passages of forceful and rapid description, hold a character of their own ; and while they remind us of the indomitable courage and patient endurance of the hardy Scandinavians, at once the honour and the terror of Europe, rise far above the tedious and creeping style which characterised the minstrel efforts of their successors, whether in France or England. In the pine forests, also, and the frozen mountains of the North, there were nursed, amid the relics of expiring Paganism, many traditions of a character more wild and terrible than the fables of classical superstition ; and these the gloomy imagination of the Skalds failed not to transfer to their romantic tales. The late spirit of inquiry, which has been so widely spread through Germany, has already begun to throw much light on this neglected storehouse of romantic lore, which is worthy of much more attention than has yet been bestowed upon it in Britain. It must, however, be remarked, that although the north possesses champions and Romances of its own, unknown to southern song, yet in a later age, the inhabitants of these countries borrowed from the French minstrels some of their most popular subjects ; and hence we find sagas on the subjects of Sir Tristrem, Sir Percival, Sir Ywayne and others, the well-known themes of French and English Romance. These, however, must necessarily be considered later in date as well as

far inferior in interest, to the sagas of genuine northern birth. Mr. Ritson has indeed quoted their existence as depreciating the pretensions of the northern nations to the possession of poems of high antiquity of their own native growth. Had he been acquainted with the *Norman-Kiêmpé Datur*, a large folio, printed at Stockholm in 1737, he would have been satisfied, that out of the numerous collection of legends respecting the achievements of Gothic champions, far the greater part are of genuine Norse origin ; and although having many features in common with the Romances of southern chivalry, they are, in the other marked particulars, distinctly divided from that class of fictitious composition.

The country of Germany, lying contiguous to France, and constantly engaged in friendly and hostile intercourse with that great seat of romantic fiction, became, of course, an early partaker in the stores which it afforded. The Minnesingers of the Holy Empire were a race no less cherished than the troubadours of Provence, or the minstrels of Normandy ; and no less active in availing themselves of their indigenous traditions, or importing those of other countries, in order to add to their stock of romantic fiction. Godfred of Strasburgh composed many thousand lines upon the popular subject of Sir Tristrem ; and others have been equally copious, both as translators and as original authors, upon various subjects connected with French Romance ; but Germany possessed materials, partly borrowed from Scandinavia, partly peculiar to her own traditional history, as well as to that of the Roman empire, which they applied to the construction of a cycle of heroes as famous in Teutonic song as those of Arthur and Charlemagne in France and in Britain.

As in all other cases of the kind, a real conqueror, the fame of whose exploits survived in tradition, was adopted as the central object, around whom were to be assembled a set of champions, and with whose history was to be interwoven the various feats of courage which they performed, and the adventures which they underwent. Theodorick, King of the Goths, called in these romantic legends, Diderick of Bern (*i. e.* Verona) was selected for this purpose by the German Minnesingers. Amongst the principal personages introduced are Ezzel, King of the Huns, who is no other than the celebrated Attila ; and Gunter, King of Burgundy, who is identified with a Guntachar of history, who really held that kingdom. The good knight Wolfram de Eschenbach seems to have been the first who assembled the scattered traditions and minstrel tales concerning these sovereigns into one large volume of German verse, entitled *Helden-Buch*, or the Book of Heroes. In this the author has availed himself of the unlimited license of a romancer ; and has connected with the history of Diderick and his chivalry a number of detached legends, which had certainly a separate and independent existence. Such is the tale of *Sigard the Horny*, which has the ap-

pearance of having originally been a Norse Saga. An analysis of this singular piece was published by Mr. Weber, in a work entitled *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, from the earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances*; and the subject has been fully illustrated by the publications of the learned Von der Hagen in Germany, and those of the Honourable William Herbert.

It is here only necessary to say, that Theodorick, like Charlemagne and Arthur, is considered in the Romance as a monarch more celebrated for the valorous achievements of the brotherhood of chivalry whom he has drawn around him than for his own, though neither deficient in strength nor courage. His principal followers have each their discriminatory and peculiar attributes. Meister Hildebrand, the Nestor of the band, is, like the Maugis of Charlemagne's heroes, a magician as well as a champion. Hogan, or Hagan, begot betwixt a mortal and a sea-goblin, is the fierce Achilles of the confederation. It is the uniform custom of the romancers to conclude by a general and overwhelming catastrophe, which destroys the whole ring of chivalry whose feats they had commemorated. The ruin which Roncesvalles brought to the Paladins of Charlemagne, and the fatal battle of Camlan to the Knights of the Round Table, fell upon the warriors of Diderick through the revengeful treachery of Crimhilda, the wife of Ezzel; who, in revenge for the death of her first husband, and in her inordinate desire to possess the treasures of the Niflunga or Burgundians, brought destruction on all those celebrated champions. Mr. Weber observes, that these German fictions differ from the Romances of French Chivalry, in the greater ferocity and less refinement of sentiment ascribed to the heroes; and also in their employing to a great extent the machinery of the Duergar, or Dwarfs, a subterranean people to whom the *Helden-Buch* ascribes much strength and subtilty, as well as profound skill in the magic art; and who seem, to a certain extent, the predecessors of the European fairy.

Italy, so long the seat of classical learning, and where that learning was first revived, seems never to have strongly embraced the taste for the Gothic Romance. They received, indeed, the forms and institutions of chivalry; but the Italians seem to have been in a considerable degree strangers to its spirit, and not to have become deeply enamoured of its literature. There is an old Romance of Chivalry proper to Italy, called *Guerino the Wretched*, but we doubt if even this be of indigenous growth. Indeed, when they did adopt from the French the fashionable tales of Charlemagne and his Paladins, they did not attract the attention of the classical Italians, until Boiardo, Berni, Pulci, and, above all, the divine Ariosto, condescended to use them as the basis of their well-known romantic poems; and thus the fictitious narratives originally composed in metre, and after re-written in prose, were anew decorated with the honours of verse. The roman-

tic poets of Italy did not even disdain to imitate the rambling, diffuse, and episodal style proper to the old Romance ; and Ariosto, in particular, although he torments the reader's attention by digressing from one adventure to another, delights us, upon frequent perusals, by the extreme ingenuity with which he gathers up the broken ends of his narrative, and finally weaves them all handsomely together in the same piece. But the merits and faults of romantic poetry form themselves the fruitful subject of a long essay. We here only notice the origin of those celebrated works, as a species of composition arising out of the old Romance, though surpassing it in regularity, as well as in all the beauties of style and diction.

With Spain the idea of Romance was particularly connected ; and the associations which are formed upon perusing the immortal work of Cervantes, induce us for a long time to believe that the country of Don Quixote must be the very cradle of romantic fiction. Yet, if we speak of priority of date, Spain was among the last nations of Europe with whom Romance became popular. It was not indeed possible that, among a people speaking so noble and poetical a language, engaged in constant wars, which called forth at once their courage and their genius, there should not exist many historical and romantic ballads descriptive of their rencounters with the Moors. But their native poets seem to have been too much engaged with the events of their own age, or of that which had just preceded them, to permit of their seeking subjects in the regions of pure fiction ; and we have not heard of a Spanish Metrical Romance, unless the poems describing the adventures of the Cid should be supposed to have any affinity to that class of composition. The Peninsula, however, though late in adopting the prevailing taste for romantic fiction, gave origin to one particular class, which was at least as popular as any which had preceded it. *Amadis de Gaul*, the production, it would seem, of Vasco de Lobeira, a Portuguese knight, who lived in the fourteenth century, gave a new turn to the tales of chivalry ; and threw into the shade the French Prose Romances, which, until the appearance of this distinguished work, had been the most popular in Europe.

The author of *Amadis*, in order, perhaps, to facilitate the other changes which he introduced, and to avoid rushing against preconceived ideas of events or character, laid aside the worn-out features of Arthur and Charlemagne, and imagined to himself a new dynasty both of sovereigns and of heroes, to whom he ascribed a style of manners much more refined, and sentiments much more artificial, than had occurred to the authors of *Perceval* or *Perceforest*. Lobeira had also taste enough to perceive, that some unity of design would be a great improvement on the old Romance, where one adventure is strung to another with little connexion from the beginning to the end of the volume ; which thus concludes, not because the plot was winded up ;

but because the author's invention, or the printer's patience, was exhausted. In the work of the Portuguese author, on the contrary, he proposes a certain end, to advance or retard which all the incidents of the work have direct reference. This is the marriage of Amadis with Oriana, against which a thousand difficulties are raised by rivals, giants, sorcerers, and all the race of evil powers unfavourable to chivalry; whilst these obstacles are removed by the valour of the hero, and constancy of the heroine, succoured on their part by those friendly sages, and blameless sorceresses, whose intervention gave so much alarm to the tender-conscienced De la Noue. Lobeira also displayed considerable attention to the pleasure which arises from the contrast of character; and to relieve that of Amadis, who is the very essence of chivalrous constancy, he has introduced Don Galaor, his brother, a gay libertine in love, whose adventures form a contrast with those of his more serious relative. Above all, the *Amadis* displays an attention to the style and conversation of the piece, which, although its effects are now exaggerated and ridiculous, was doubtless at the time considered as the pitch of elegance; and here were, for the first time, introduced those hyperbolical compliments, and that inflated and complicated structure of language, the sense of which walks as in a masquerade.

The *Amadis* at first consisted only of four books, and in that limited shape may be considered as a very well-conducted story; but additions were speedily made which extended the number to twenty-four; containing the history of Amadis subsequent to his obtaining possession of Oriana, and down to his death, as also of his numerous descendants. The theme was not yet exhausted; for, as the ancient romancers, when they commenced a new work, chose for their hero some newly-invented Paladin of Charlemagne, or knight of King Arthur, so did their new successors adopt a new descendant of the family of Amadis, whose genealogy was thus multiplied to a prodigious degree. For an account of *Esplandian*, *Florimond of Greece*, *Palmerin of England*, and the other Romances of this class, the reader must be referred to the valuable labours of Mr. Southey, who has abridged both *Amadis* and *Palmerin* with the most accurate attention to the style and manners of the original. The books of *Amadis* became so very popular as to supersede the elder Romances almost entirely, even at the court of France, where, according to La Noue, already quoted, they were introduced about the reign of Henry II. It was against the extravagance of these fictions, in character and in style, that the satire of Cervantes was chiefly directed; and almost all the library of Don Quixote belongs to this class of Romances, which, no doubt, his adventures contributed much to put out of fashion.

In every point of view, France must be considered as the country in which Chivalry and Romance flourished in the highest perfection; and

the originals of almost all the early Romances, whether in prose or verse, whether relating to the history of Arthur or of Charlemagne, are to be found in the French language ; and other countries possess only translations from thence. This will not be so surprising when it is recollected, that these earlier Romances were written, not only for the use of the French, but of the English themselves, amongst whom French was the prevailing language during the reigns of the Anglo-Norman monarchs. Indeed, it has been ingeniously supposed, and not without much apparent probability, that the fame of Arthur was taken by the French minstrels for the foundation of their stories in honour of the English kings, who reigned over the supposed dominions of that British hero ; while, on the other hand, the minstrels who repaired to the Court of France, celebrated the prowess of Charlemagne and his twelve peers as a subject more gratifying to those who sat upon his throne. It is, perhaps, some objection to this ingenious theory, that, as we have already seen, the battle of Hastings was opened by a minstrel, who sung the war-song of Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne ; so that the Norman Duke brought with him to England the tales that are supposed, at a much later date, to have been revived to soothe the national pride of the French minstrels.

How the French minstrels came originally by the traditional relics concerning Arthur and Merlin, on which they wrought so long and so largely, must, we fear, always remain uncertain. From the Saxons, we may conclude they had them not ; for the Saxons were the very enemies against whom Arthur employed his good sword Excalibar ; that is to say, if there was such a man, or such a weapon. We know, indeed, that the British, like all the branches of the Celtic race, were much attached to poetry and music, which the numerous relics of ancient poetry in Wales, Ireland, and the Highlands of Scotland, sufficiently evince. Arthur, a name famous among them, with some traditions concerning the sage Merlin, may have floated either in Armorica, or among the half-British of the borders of Scotland, and of Cumberland ; and, thus preserved, may have reached the ear of the Norman minstrels, either in their newly-conquered dominions, or through their neighbours of Brittany. A theme of this sort once discovered, and found acceptable to the popular ear, gave rise, of course, to a thousand imitations ; and gradually drew around it a cloud of fiction which, embellished by such poetry as the minstrels could produce, arranged itself by degrees into a system of fabulous history, as the congregated vapours, touched by the setting sun, assume the form of battlements and towers. We know that the history of Sir Tristrem, first versified by Thomas the Rhymer of Ercildoune, was derived from Welsh traditions, though told by a Saxon poet. In fact, it may be easily supposed, that the romancers of that early period were more eager to acquire popular subjects than delicately scrupulous of borrowing from their

neighbours ; and when the foundation-stone was once laid, each subsequent minstrel brought his contribution to the building. The idea of an association of knights assembled around one mighty sovereign, was so flattering to all the ruling princes of Europe, that almost all of them endeavoured to put themselves at the head of some similar institution. The historical foundation of this huge superstructure is almost imperceptible. Mr. Turner has shown that the evidence rather inclines to prove the actual existence of King Arthur ; and the names of Gawain, his nephew, and of Geneura, his faithful spouse, of Mordred, and Merlin, were preserved by Welsh tradition. To the same source may be referred the loves of Tristrem and Ysolde, which, although a separate story, has become, in the later Romances, amalgamated with that of Arthur. But there can be little doubt that all beyond the bare names of the heroes owes its existence to the imagination of the romancers.

It might be thought that the Romances referring to the feats of Charlemagne ought to contain more historical truth than those concerning Arthur ; since the former relate to a well-known monarch and conqueror, the latter to a personage of a very doubtful and shadowy existence. But the Romances concerning both are equally fabulous. Charles had, indeed, an officer named Roland, who was slain with other nobles in the field of Roncesvalles, fighting, not against the Saracens or Spaniards, but against the Gascons. This is the only point upon which the real history of Charlemagne coincides with that invented for him by romancers. Roland was Prefect of Bretagne, and his memory was long preserved in the war-song which bore his name. A fabulous chronicler, calling himself Turpin, compiled, in or about the eleventh century, a romantic history of Charlemagne ; but it may be doubted whether, in some instances, he has not availed himself of the fictions already devised by the early romancers, while to those who succeeded them, his annals afforded matter for new figments. The personal character of Charlemagne has suffered considerably in the hands of the romantic authors, although they exaggerated his power and his victories. He is represented as fond of flattery, irritable in his temper, ungrateful for the services rendered him by his most worthy Paladins, and a perpetual dupe to the treacherous artifices of Count Gan, or Ganelon, of Mayence ; a renegade to whom the romancers impute the defeat at Roncesvalles, and all the other misfortunes of the reign of Charles. This unfavourable view of the Prince, although it may bear some features of royalty, neither resembles the real character of the conqueror of the Saxons and Lombards, nor can be easily reconciled with the idea that he was introduced to flatter the personal vanity of the Princes of the Valois race, by a portrait of their great predecessor.

The circumstance, that Roland was a lieutenant of Brittany, and the certainty that Marie borrowed from that country the incidents out of

which she composed her lays, seems to fortify the theory that the French minstrels obtained from that country much of their most valuable materials ; and that, after all that has been said and supposed, the history of Arthur probably reached them through the same channel.

The Latin writers of the middle ages afforded the French romancers the themes of those metrical legends which they have composed on subjects of classical fame.

The honour of the prose Romances of Chivalry, exclusive always of the books of *Amadis*, belongs entirely to the French, and the curious volumes which are now the object of so much research amongst collectors, are almost universally printed at Paris.

England, so often conquered, yet fated to receive an accession of strength from each new subjugation, cannot boast much of ancient literature of any kind ; and, in the department of which we treat, was totally inferior to France. The Saxons had, no doubt, Romances (taking the word in its general acceptation ;) and Mr. Turner, to whose researches we are so much indebted, has given us the abridgement of one entitled *Cædmon*, in which the hero, whose adventures are told much after the manner of the ancient Norse Sagas, encounters, defeats, and finally slays an evil being called Grendel, who, except in his being subject to death, seems a creature of a supernatural description. But the literature of the Saxons was destroyed by the success of William the Conqueror, and the Norman knights and barons, among whom England was in a great measure divided, sought amusement, not in the lays of the vanquished, but in those composed in their own language. In this point of view, England, as a country, may lay claim to many of the French Romances, which were written, indeed, in that language, but for the benefit of the court and nobles of England, by whom French was still spoken. When the two languages began to assimilate together, and to form the mixed dialect termed the Anglo-Norman, we have good authority for saying that it was easily applied to the purpose of romantic fiction, and recited in the presence of the nobility.

Robert de la Brunne, who composed his *History of England* about this time, has this remarkable passage, which we give, along with the commentary of the Editor of *Sir Tristrem*, as it is peculiarly illustrative of the subject we are inquiring into.

Als thai haf wryten and sayd
Haf I alle in myn Inglis layd,
In simple speche as I couthe,
That is lightest in manne's mouthe.
I made noght for no discours,
Ne for no seggours, no harpours,
Bot for the luf of symple men,
That strange Inglis cannot ken ;
For many it ere that strange Inglis,
In ryme wate never what it is ;

And bot thai wist what it mente,
Ellis methought it were alle schente.
I made it not for to be praysed,
Bot at the lewed men were aysed.
If it were made in ryme couwee,
Or in strangere, or enterlacé,
That rede Inglis it ere inowe,
That couthe not have copped a kowe.
That outhir in cowee or in baston,
Sum suld haf ben fardon ;

So that fele men that it herde
 Suld not witte howe that it ferde.
*I see in song, in sedgelyng tale,
 Of Erceldoune and of Kendale,
 Non thaim sayis as thai thaim wroght,
 And in their saying it semes noght,
 That may thou here in Sir Tristrem,
 Over gester it has the steem,
 Over all that is or was,
 If men it sayd as made Thomas;
 Bot I here it no man so say,
 That of some cople som is away.
 So thare fayre saying here beforene,
 Is thare travaile nere forlorne;
 Thai sayd it for pride and nobleye,
 That were not suylike as thei.
 And alle that thai willed overwhere,
 Alle that ilke will now forfare.*

Thai seyde it in so quaint Inglis,
 That many wate not what it is.
 Therefore heuyed wele the more
 In strange ryme to travayle sore;
 And my wit was oure thyne
 So strange speche to travayle in;
 And forsoth I couth noght
 So strange Inglis as thai wroght,
 And men besoght me many a tyme
 To turne it bot in light ryme.
 Thai seyde if I in strange ryme it turne,
 To here it many on suld skorne;
 For in it ere names full selcouthe,
 That ere not used now in mouthe.
 And therefore, for the commonalté,
 That blythely wald listen to me,
 On light lange I it began,
 For luf of the lewed man.

"This passage requires some commentary, as the sense has been generally mistaken. Robert de Brunne does not mean, as has been supposed, that the minstrels who repeated Thomas's Romance of *Sir Tristrem*, disguised the meaning by putting it into '*quainte Inglis*;' but, on the contrary, that Kendal and Thomas of Erceldoune did themselves use such '*quainte Inglis*;' that those who repeated the story were unable to understand it, or to make it intelligible to their hearers. Above all, he complains, that by writing an intricate and complicated stanza, as '*ryme cowee, strangere*,' or '*entrelacé*,' it was difficult for the *disours* to recollect the poem; and of *Sir Tristrem*, in particular, he avers, that he never heard a perfect recital, because of some one '*copple*' or stanza, a part was always omitted. Hence he argues at length that he himself, writing not for the minstrel or harper, nor to acquire personal fame, but solely to instruct the ignorant in the history of their country, does well in choosing a simple structure of verse, which they can retain correctly on their memory, and a style which is popular and easily understood. Besides which, he hints at the ridicule he might draw on his poem, should he introduce the uncouth name of his personages into a courtly or refined strain of verse. They were

'Great names, but hard in verse to stand.'

While he arrogates praise to himself for his choice, he excuses Thomas of Erceldoune and Kendale for using a more ambitious and ornate kind of poetry. 'They wrote for pride (fame) and for nobles, not such as these my ignorant hearers.'**

If the editor of *Sir Tristrem* be correct in his commentary, there existed in the time of Thomas de Brunne minstrels or poets who composed English poetry to be recited in the presence of the great, and who, for that purpose, used a singularly difficult stanza, which was very apt to

* *Sir Tristrem*, Introduction, pp. 61-65, Edin. 1804.

be mutilated in recitation. *Sir Tristrem*, even as it now exists, shows likewise that considerable art was resorted to in constructing the stanza, and has, from beginning to end, a concise, quaint, abstract turn of expression, more like the Saxon poetry than the simple, bold, and diffuse details of the French minstrel. Besides *Sir Tristrem*, there remain, we conceive, two other examples of "gestes written in quaint Inglis," composed, namely, according to fixed and complicated rules of verse, and with much attention to the language, though the effect produced is far from pleasing. They are both of Scottish origin, which may be explained by recollecting that in the Saxon provinces of Scotland, as well as at the court, Norman was never generally used; and therefore it is probable that the English language was more cultivated in that country at an early period than in England itself, where, among the higher classes, it was for a long time superseded by that of the conquerors. These Romances, entitled *Sir Gawain*, and *Sir Gologras*, and *Sir Galeran of Galloway*, have all the appearance of being original compositions, and display considerable poetical effort. But the uncouth use of words dragged in for the sake of alliteration, and used in secondary and oblique meanings, renders them extremely harsh in construction, as well as obscure in meaning.

In England, it would seem that the difficulties pointed out by De la Brunne early threw out of fashion this ornate kind of composition; and the English minstrels had no readier resource than translating from the French, who supplied their language at the same time with the phrases of chivalry which did not exist in English. These compositions presented many facilities to the minstrel. He could, if possessed of the slightest invention, add to them at pleasure, and they might as easily be abridged, when memory failed or occasion required. Accordingly, translations from the French fill up the list of English Romance. They are generally written in short lines rhyming together; though often, by way of variety, the third and sixth lines are made to rhyme together, and the poem is thus divided into stanzas of three couplets each. In almost all of these legends reference is made to "the Romance," that is, some composition in the French language, as to the original authority. Nay, which is very singular, tales where the subjects appear to be of English growth, seem to have yet existed in France ere they were translated into the language of the country to which the heroes belonged. This seems to have been the case with *Hornchild*, with *Guy of Warwick*, with *Bevis of Hampton*, all of which appear to belong originally to England; yet are their earliest histories found in the French language, or at least the vernacular versions refer to such for their authority. Even the Romance of *Richard*, England's own Cœur de Lion, has perpetual references to the French original from which it was translated. It must naturally be supposed that these translations were inferior to the originals; and whether it was owing to this cause, or that the com-

position of these rhymes was attended with too much facility, and so fell into the hands of very inferior composers, it is certain, and is proved by the highest authority, that of Chaucer himself, that even in his time these rhyming Romances had fallen into great contempt. The *Rime of Sir Thopas*, which that poet introduces as a parody, undoubtedly, of the rhythmical Romances of the age, is interrupted by mine host, Harry Bailly with the strongest and most energetic expressions of total and absolute contempt. But though the minstrels were censured by De la Brunne for lack of skill and memory, and the poems which they recited were branded as "drafty rhymings," by the far more formidable sentence of Chaucer, their acceptance with the public in general must have been favourable, since, besides many unpublished volumes, the two publications of Ritson and Weber bear evidence of their popularity. Some original compositions doubtless occur among so many translations, but they are not numerous, and few have been preserved. The poem of *Sir Eger and Sir Greme*, which seems of Scottish origin, has no French original; nor has it been discovered either of the *Squire of Low Degree*, *Sir Eglamour*, *Sir Pleindamour*, or some others. But the French derivation of the two last names renders it probable that such may exist.

The minstrels and their compositions seem to have fallen into utter contempt about the time of Henry VIII. There is a piteous picture of their condition in the person of Richard Sheale, which it is impossible to read without compassion, if we consider that he was the preserver at least, if not the author, of the celebrated heroic ballad of *Chevy Chase*, at which Sir Philip Sydney's heart was wont to beat as at the sound of a trumpet. This luckless minstrel had been robbed on Dunsmore Heath, and, shame to tell, he was unable to persuade the public that a son of the muses had ever been possessed of the twenty pounds which he averred he had lost on the occasion. The account he gives of the effect upon his spirits is melancholy, and yet ridiculous enough.

"After my robbery my memory was so decayed,
That I colde neather syne nor talke, my wytt were so dismayde.
My audacitie was gone, and all my myrry tawke,
Ther ys sum heare have sene me as myrry as a hawke;
But nowe I am so trullyde wih phansis in my mynde,
That I cannot play the myrry knave, according to my kynd.
Yet to tak thought, I perseve, ys not the next waye
To bring me out of det, my creditors to paye.
I may well say that I hade but evil hape,
For to lose about threscore pounds at a clape,
The loss of my mony did not greve me so sore,
But the talke of the pyple dyde greve me moch mor.
Sum sayde I was not robde, I was but a lyeng knave.
Yt was not possyble for a mynstrell so much mony to have;
In dede, to say the truthe, that ys ryght well knowene,
That I never had so moche mony of myne owene,
But I had friendds in London, whos namys I can declare,
That at all tymes wolde lende me cc, lds, worth of ware,

And sum agayn such frendship I founde,
 That thei wold lend me in mony nyn or ten pownde.
 The occasion why I cam in debt I shall make relacion,
 My wyff in dede ys a sylk woman be her occupation,
 And lynen cloths most cheffy was her greatyste trayd,
 And at faris and merkytts she solde sale-warre that she made;
 As shertts, smockys, partlytts, hede clothes, and othar thinggs,
 As sylk thredd, and eggyns, skirrts, bandds, and strings."

From *The Chant* of Richard Sheale, *British Bibliographer*, No. xiii., p. 101.

Elsewhere, Sheale hints that he had trusted to his harp, and to the well-known poverty attached to those who used that instrument, to bear him safe through Dunsmore Heath. At length the order of English minstrels was formally put down by the act 39th of Queen Elizabeth, classing them with sturdy beggars and vagabonds; in which disgraceful fellowship they only existed in the capacity of fiddlers, who accompanied their instrument with their voice. Such a character is introduced in the play of *Monsieur Thomas*, as the "poor fiddler who says his songs."

The Metrical Romances which they recited also fell into disrepute, though some of the more popular, sadly abridged and adulterated, continued to be published in *chap books*, as they are called. About fifty or sixty years since, a person acquired the nickname of *Rosewal and Lilian* from singing that Romance about the streets of Edinburgh, which is probably the very last instance of the proper minstrel craft.

If the Metrical Romances of England can boast of few original compositions, they can show yet fewer examples of the Prose Romance. Sir Thomas Malory, indeed, compiled from various French authorities, his celebrated *Morte d'Arthur*, indisputably the best Prose Romance the language can boast. There is also *Arthur of Little Britain*; and the Lord Berners compiled the Romance of the *Knight of the Swan*. The books of *Amadis* were likewise translated into English; but it may be doubted whether the country in general ever took that deep interest in the perusal of these records of love and honour with which they were greeted in France. Their number was fewer; and the attention paid to them in a country where great political questions began to be agitated, was much less than when the feudal system still continued in its full vigour.

III. We should now say something on those various kinds of romantic fictions which succeeded to the Romance of Chivalry. But we can only notice briefly works which have long slumbered in oblivion, and which certainly are not worthy to have their slumbers disturbed.

Even in the time of Cervantes, the Pastoral Romance, founded upon the *Diana* of George of Monté Mayor, was prevailing to such an extent as made it worthy of his satire. It was, indeed, a system still more remote from common sense and reality than that of chivalry itself. For the maxims of chivalry, high-strained and absurd as they are, did actually influence living beings, and even the fate of kingdoms. If

Amadis de Gaule was a fiction, the Chevalier Bayard was a real person. But the existence of an Arcadia, a pastoral region in which a certain fantastic sort of personages, desperately in love, and thinking of nothing else but their mistresses, played upon pipes, and wrote sonnets from morning to night, yet were supposed all the while to be tending their flocks, was too monstrously absurd to be long tolerated.

A numerous, and once most popular, class of fictions, was that entitled the *Heroic Romance of the Seventeenth Century*.

If the ancient *Romance of Chivalry* has a right to be called the parent of those select and beautiful fictions, which the genius of the Italian poets has enriched with such peculiar charms, another of its direct descendants, *The Heroic Romance of the Seventeenth Century*, is with few exceptions the most dull and tedious species of composition that ever obtained temporary popularity. The old Romance of Heliodorus, entitled *Theagenes and Chariclea*, supplied, perhaps, the earliest model of this style of composition ; but it was from the Romances of Chivalry that it derives its most peculiar characteristics. A man of a fantastic imagination, Honoré d'Urfé, led the way in this style of composition. Being willing to record certain love intrigues of a complicated nature which had taken place in his own family, and amongst his friends, he imagined to himself a species of Arcadia on the banks of the Lignon, whose inhabitants lived for love and for love alone. There are two principal stories, said to represent the family history of D'Urfé and his brother, with about thirty episodes, in which the gallantries and intrigues of Henry IV.'s court are presented under borrowed names. Considered by itself, this is but an example of the Pastoral Romance ; but it was so popular, that three celebrated French authors, Gomberville, Calprenède, and Madam Scuderi, seized the pen, and composed in emulation many interminable folios of Heroic Romance. In these insipid performances, a conventional character, and a set of family manners and features, are ascribed to the heroes and heroines, although selected from distant ages and various quarters of the world. The heroines are, without exception, models of beauty and perfection ; and so well persuaded of it themselves, that to approach them with the most humble declaration of love was a crime sufficient to deserve the penalty of banishment from their presence ; and it is well it were softened to the audacious lover, by permission, or command to live, without which, absence and death are accounted synonymous. On the other hand, the heroes, whatever kingdoms they have to govern, or other earthly duties to perform, live through these folios for love alone ; and the most extraordinary revolutions which can agitate the world are ascribed to the charms of a Mandana or a Statira acting upon the crazy understanding of their lovers. Nothing can be so uninteresting as the frigid extravagance with which these lovers express their passion ; or, in their own phrase, nothing can be more freezing than their

flames, more creeping than their flights of passion. Yet the line of metaphysical gallantry which they exhibited had its fashion, and a long one, both in France and England. In England they continued to be read by our grandmothers during the Augustan age of English, and while Addison was amusing the world with its wit, and Pope by its poetry. The fashion did not decay till about the reign of George I.; and even more lately, Mrs. Lennox, patronised by Dr. Johnson, wrote a very good imitation of Cervantes, entitled, *The Female Quixote*, which had these works for its basis. They are now totally forgotten.

The Modern Romance, so ennobled by the productions of so many master hands, would require a long disquisition. But we can here only name that style of composition in which De Foe rendered fiction more impressive than truth itself, and Swift could render plausible even the grossest impossibilities.

THE DRAMA.

A DRAMA (we adopt Dr. Johnson's definition, with some little extension) is a poem or fictitious composition in dialogue, in which the action is not related, but represented.

A disposition to this fascinating amusement, considered in its rudest state, seems to be inherent in human nature. It is the earliest sport of children, to take upon themselves some fictitious character, and sustain it to the best of their skill, by such appropriate gestures and language, as their youthful fancies suggest, and such dress and decoration as circumstances place within their reach. The infancy of nations is as prone to this pastime as that of individuals. When the horde emerges out of a nearly brutal state, so far as to have holidays, public sports, and general rejoicings, the pageant of their imaginary deities, or of their fabulous ancestors, is usually introduced as the most pleasing and interesting part of the show. But however general the predisposition to the assumption of fictitious character may be, there is an immeasurable distance betwixt the rude games in which it first displays itself and that polished amusement which is numbered among the fine arts, which poetry, music, and painting have vied to adorn, to whose service genius has devoted her most sublime efforts, while philosophy has stooped from her loftier task, to regulate the progress of the action, and give probability to the representation and personification of the scene.

The history of Greece—of that wonderful country whose days of glory have left such a never-dying blaze of radiance behind them—the history of Greece affords us the means of correctly tracing the polished

and regulated Drama, the subject of severe rule, and the vehicle for expressing the noblest poetry, from amusements as rude in their outline, as the mimic sports of children or of savages. The history of the Grecian stage is that of the dramatic art in general. They transferred the Drama, with their other literature, to the victorious Romans, with whom it rather existed as a foreign than flourished as a native art. Like the other fine arts, the stage sunk under the decay of the empire, and its fall was accelerated by the introduction of the Christian religion. In the middle ages, dramatic representation revived, in the shape of the homely Mysteries and Moralities of our forefathers. The revival of letters threw light upon the scenic art, by making us acquainted with the pitch of perfection to which it had been carried by the genius of Greece. With this period commences the history of the modern stage, properly so called. Some general observations on the Drama, and on its present state in Britain, will form a natural conclusion to the Article.

The account which we have of the origin of Grecian theatrical representations, describes them as the fantastic orgies of shepherds and peasants, who solemnized the rights of Bacchus by the sacrifice of a goat, by tumultuous dances, and by a sort of masquerade, in which the actors were disguised like the ancient *Morrice-dancers* of England, or the *Guisards* of Scotland, who have not as yet totally disused similar revels. Instead of masks, their faces were stained with the lees of wine, and the songs and jests corresponded in coarseness to the character of the satyrs and fawns, which they were supposed to assume in honour of their patron Bacchus. Music, however, always formed a part of this rude festivity, and to this was sometimes added the recitations of an individual performer, who, possessed of more voice or talent than his companions, was able to entertain an audience for a few minutes by his own unaided exertions.

Out of such rude materials, Thespis is supposed to have been the first who framed something like an approach to a more regular entertainment. The actors under this, the first of theatrical managers, instead of running about wild among the audience, were exalted upon a cart, or upon a scaffold formed of boards laid upon trestles. In these improvements Thespis is supposed to have had the aid of one Susarion, whose efforts were more particularly directed to the comic Drama. But their fortunes have been unequal; for, while the name of Thespis is still united with everything dramatic, that of Susarion has fallen into oblivion, and is only known to antiquaries.

The Drama in Greece, as afterwards in Britain, had scarce begun to develop itself from barbarism ere, with the most rapid strides, it advanced towards perfection. Thespis and Susarion flourished about four hundred and forty or fifty years before the Christian era. The battle of Marathon was fought in the year 490 before Christ; and it

was upon Æschylus, one of the Athenian generals upon that memorable occasion, that Greece conferred the honoured title of the Father of Tragedy. We must necessarily judge of his efforts by that which he did, not by that which he left undone ; and if some of his regulations may sound strange in modern ears, it is but just to compare the state in which he found the Drama with that in which he left it.

Æschylus was the first who, availing himself of the invention of a stage by Thespis, introduced upon the boards a plurality of actors at the same time, and converted into action and dialogue, accompanied or relieved at intervals by the musical performance of the Chorus, the dull monologue of the Thespian orator. It was Æschylus, also, who introduced the deceptions of scenery ; stationary, indeed, and therefore very different from the decorations of our stage, but still giving a reality to the whole performance, which could not fail to afford pleasure to those who beheld, for the first time, an effort to surround the player, while invested with his theatrical character, with scenery which might add to the illusions of the representation. This was not all : A theatre, at first of wood, but afterwards of stone, circumscribed, while it accommodated the spectators, and reduced a casual and disorderly mob to the quality and civilization of a regular and attentive audience.

The most remarkable effect of the tragedy of Æschylus, was the introduction of the Chorus in a new character, which continued long to give a peculiar tone to the Grecian Drama, and still makes the broad and striking difference betwixt that original theatre, and those which have arisen in modern nations. The Chorus, who sung hymns in favour of Bacchus—the musical part, in short, of the entertainment—remained in the days of Thespis exactly as it had been in the rude village gambols which he had improved, the principal part of the dramatic entertainment. The intervention of monologue, or recitation, was merely a relief to the musicians, and a variety to the audience. Æschylus, while he assigned a part of superior consequence to the actor in his improved dialogue, new-modelled the Chorus, which custom still enjoined as a necessary and indispensable branch of the entertainment. They were no longer a body of vocal musicians, whose strains were as independent of what was spoken by the personages of the Drama, as those of our modern orchestra when performing betwixt the acts ; the Chorus assumed from this time a different and complicated character, which forms a marked peculiarity in the Grecian Drama, distinguishing it from the theatrical compositions of modern Europe.

The Chorus, according to this new model, was composed of a certain set of persons, priests, captive virgins, matrons, or others, usually of a solemn and sacred character, the contemporaries of the heroes who appeared on the stage, who remained upon the scene to celebrate in hymns set to music the events which had befallen the active persons

of the Drama ; to afford them alternately their advice or their sympathy ; and, at least, to moralize, in lyrical poetry, on the feelings to which their history and adventures, their passions and sufferings, gave rise. The Chorus might be considered as, in some degree, the representatives of the audience, or rather of the public, on whose great stage those events happen in reality, which are presented in the mimicry of the Drama. In the strains of the Chorus, the actual audience had those feelings suggested to them, as if by reflection in a mirror, which the events of the scene ought to produce in their own bosom ; they had at once before them the action of the piece, and the effect of that action upon a chosen band of persons, who, like themselves, were passive spectators, whose dignified strains pointed out the moral reflections to which the subject naturally gave rise. The chorus were led or directed by a single person of their number, termed the Coryphæus, who frequently spoke or sung alone. They were occasionally divided into two bands, who addressed and replied to each other. But they always preserved the character proper to them, of spectators, rather than agents in the Drama.

The number of the Chorus varied at different periods, often extending to fifty persons, and sometimes restricted to half that number ; and it is evident that the presence of so many persons on the scene, officiating as no part of the *dramatis personæ*, but rather as contemporary spectators, involved many inconveniences and inconsistencies. That which the hero, however agitated by passion, must naturally have suppressed within his own breast, or uttered in soliloquy, was thus necessarily committed to the confidence of fifty people, less or more. And when a deed of violence was to be committed, the helpless chorus, instead of interfering to prevent the atrocity to which the perpetrator had made them privy, could only, by the rules of the theatre, exhaust their sorrow and surprise in dithyrambics.

But still the union which Æschylus accomplished betwixt the didactic hymns of the Chorus, and the events which were passing upon the stage, was a most important improvement upon the earlier Drama. By this means, the two unconnected branches of the old Bacchanalian revels were combined together ; and we ought rather to be surprised that Æschylus ventured, while accomplishing such a union, to render the hymns sung by the Chorus subordinate to the action or dialogue, than that he did not take the bolder measure of altogether discarding that which, before his time, was reckoned the principal object of a religious entertainment.

The new theatre and stage of Athens was reared, as we have seen, under the inspection of Æschylus. He also introduced dresses in character for his principal actors, to which were added embellishments of a kind which mark the wide distinction betwixt the ancient and modern stage. The personal disguise which had formerly been

attained by staining the actor's face, was now, by what doubtless was considered as a high exertion of ingenuity, accomplished by the use of a mask, so painted as to represent the personage whom he represented. To augment the apparent awkwardness of this contrivance, the mouths of these masks were frequently fashioned like the extremity of a trumpet, which, if it aided the actor's voice to reach the extremity of the huge circuit to which he addressed himself, must still have made a ridiculous appearance upon the stage, had not the habits and expectations of the spectators been in a different tone from those of a modern audience. The use of the *cothurnus*, or buskin, which was contrived so as to give to the performer additional and unnatural stature, would have fallen under the same censure. But the ancient and modern theatres may be said to resemble each other only in name, as will appear from the following account of the Grecian stage, abridged from the best antiquaries.

The theatres of the Greeks were immensely large in comparison to ours ; and the audience sat upon rows of benches, rising above each other in due gradation. In form they resembled a horse-shoe. The stage occupied a platform, which closed in the flat end of the building, and was raised so high as to be on a level with the lowest row of benches. The central part of the theatre, or what we call the *pit*, instead of being filled with spectators, according to modern custom, was left for the occasional occupation of the Chorus, during those parts of their duty which did not require them to be nearer to the stage. This space was called the ORCHESTRA, and corresponded in some measure with the open space which, in the modern equestrian amphitheatres, is interposed betwixt the audience and the stage, for the display of feats of horsemanship. The delusion of the scene being thus removed to a considerable distance from the eye of the spectator, was heightened, and many of the objections offered to the use of the mask and the buskin were lessened, or totally removed. When the Chorus did not occupy the orchestra, they ranged themselves beside the THYMELE, a sort of altar, surrounded with steps, placed in front of their stage Orchestra. From this, as a post of observation, they watched the progress of the Drama, and to this point the actors turned themselves when addressing them. The solemn hymns and mystic dances of the Chorus, performed during their retreat into the orchestra, formed a sort of interludes, or interruptions of the action, similar in effect to the modern division into acts. But, properly speaking, there was no interruption of the representation from beginning to end. The piece was not, indeed, constantly progressive, but the illusion of the scene was always before the audience, either by means of the actors themselves, or of the Chorus. And the musical recitation and character of the dances traced by the Chorus in their interludes, were always in correspondence with the character of the piece, grave, majestic, and

melancholy, in tragedy; gay and lively, in comedy; and during the representation of satirical pieces, wild, extravagant, and bordering on buffoonery. The number of these interludes, or interruptions of the action, seems to have varied from three to six, or even more, at the pleasure of the author. The music was simple and inartificial, although it seems to have produced powerful effects on the audience. Two flute-players performed a prelude to the choral hymns, or directed the movement of the dances; which, in tragedy, were a solemn, slow, modulated succession of movements, very little resembling any thing termed dancing among the moderns.

The stage itself was well contrived for the purposes of the Greek Drama. The front was called the *LOGEUM*, and occupied the full width of the flat termination of the theatre, contracted, however, at each extremity, by a wall, which served to conceal the machinery necessary for the piece. The stage narrowed as it retired backwards, and the space so restricted in breadth was called the *PROSCENIUM*. It was terminated by a flat decoration, on which was represented the front of a temple, palace, or whatever else the poet had chosen for his scene. Suitable decorations appeared on the wings, as in our theatres. There were several entrances, both by the back scene and in front. These were not used indiscriminately, but so as to indicate the story of the piece, and render it more clear to apprehension. Thus, the persons of the Drama, who were supposed to belong to the palace or temple in the flat scene, entered from the side or the main door, as befitted their supposed rank; those who were inhabitants of the place represented, entered through a door placed at the side of the *Logeum*, while those supposed to come from a distance were seen to traverse the *Orchestra*, and to ascend the stage by a stair of communication, so that the audience were made spectators, as it were, of his journey. The *Proscenium* was screened by a curtain, which was withdrawn when the piece commenced. The decorations could be in some degree altered, so as to change the scene; though this, we apprehend, was seldom practised. But machinery for the ascent of phantoms, the descent of deities, and similar exhibitions, were as much in fashion among the Greeks as on our own modern stage; with better reason, indeed, for we shall presently see that the themes which they held most proper to the stage, called frequently for the assistance of these mechanical contrivances.

On the dress and costume of their personages, the Greeks bestowed much trouble and expense. It was their object to disguise, as much as possible, the mortal actor who was to represent a divinity or a hero; and while they hid his face, and augmented his height, they failed not to assign him a masque and dress in exact conformity to the popular idea of the character represented; so that, seen across the *orchestra*, he might appear the exact resemblance of *Hercules* or of *Agamemnon*.

The Grecians, but in particular the Athenians, became most passionately attached to the fascinating and splendid amusement which Æschylus thus regulated, which Sophocles and Euripides improved, and which all three, with other dramatists of inferior talents, animated by the full vigour of their genius. The delightful climate of Greece permitted the spectators to remain in the open air (for there was no roof to their huge theatres), for whole days, during which several plays, high monuments of poetical talent, were successively performed before them. The enthusiasm of their attention may be judged of by what happened during the representation of a piece written by Hegemon. It was while the Athenians were thus engaged, that there suddenly arrived the astounding intelligence of the total defeat of their army before Syracuse. The theatre was filled with the relations of those who had fallen; there was scarce a spectator who, besides sorrowing as a patriot, was not called to mourn a friend or relative. But, spreading their mantles before their faces, they commanded the representation to proceed, and, thus veiled, continued to give it their attention to the conclusion. National pride, doubtless, had its share in this singular conduct, as well as fondness for the dramatic art. Another instance is given of the nature and acuteness of their feelings, when the assembly of the people amerced Phrynichus with a fine of a thousand drachmae, because, in a comedy founded upon the siege of Miletos, he had agitated their feelings to excess, in painting an incident which Athens lamented as a misfortune dishonourable to her arms and her councils.

The price of admission was at first one *drachma*; but Pericles, desirous of propitiating the ordinary class of citizens, caused the entrance-money to be lowered to two *oboli*, so that the meanest Athenian had the ready means of indulging in this luxurious mental banquet. As it became difficult to support the expense of the stage, for which such cheap terms of admission could form no adequate fund, the same statesman, by an indulgence yet more perilous, caused the deficiency to be supplied from the treasure destined to sustain the expense of the war. It is a sufficient proof of the devotion of the Athenians to the stage, that not even the eloquence of Demosthenes could tempt them to forego this pernicious system. He touched upon the evil in two of his orations; but the Athenians were resolved not to forego the benefits of an abuse which they were aware could not be justified;—they passed a law making it death to touch that article of reformation.

It must not be forgotten, that the Grecian audience enjoyed the exercise of critical authority as well as of classical amusement at their theatre. They applauded and censured as at the present day, by clapping hands and hissing. Their suffrage, at those tragedies acted upon the solemn feast of Bacchus, adjudged a laurel crown to the most

successful dramatic author. This faculty was frequently abused : but the public, on sober reflection, seldom failed to be ashamed of such acts of injustice, and faithful, upon the whole, to the rules of criticism, evinced a fineness and correctness of judgment, which never descended to the populace of any other nation.

To this general account of the Grecian stage, it is proper to add some remarks on those peculiar circumstances, from which it derives a tone and character so different from that of the modern Drama—circumstances affecting at once its style of action, mode of decoration, and general effect on the feelings of the spectators.

The Grecian Drama, it must be remembered, derived its origin from a religious ceremony, and, amid all its refinement, never lost its devotional character, unless it shall be judged to have done so in the department of satirical comedy.

When the audience was assembled, they underwent a religious lustration, and the archons, or chief magistrates, paid their public adoration to Bacchus, still regarded as the patron of the theatrical art, and whose altar was always placed in the theatre.

The subject of the Drama was frequently religious. In tragedy, especially, Sophocles and Euripides, as well as Æschylus, selected their subjects from the exploits of the deities themselves, or of the demi-gods and heroes whom Greece accounted to draw an immediate descent from the denizens of Olympus, and to whom she paid nearly equal reverence. The object of the tragic poets was less to amuse and interest their audience by the history of the human heart, or soften them by the details of domestic distress, than to elevate them into a sense of devotion or submission, or to astound and terrify them by the history and actions of a race of beings before whom ordinary mortality dwindled into pigmy size. This the ancient dramatists dared to attempt ; and, what may appear still more astonishing to the mere English reader, this they appear in a great measure to have performed. Effects were produced upon their audience which we can only attribute to the awful impression communicated by the immediate presence of the Divinity. The emotions excited by the apparition of the Eumenides, or Furies, in Æschylus's tragedy of that name, so appalled the audience, that females are said to have lost the fruit of their womb, and children to have actually expired in convulsions of terror. These effects may have been exaggerated : but that considerable inconveniences occurred from the extreme horror with which this tragedy impressed the spectators, is evident from a decree of the magistrates, limiting the number of the Chorus, in order to prevent in future such tragical consequences. It is plain, that the feeling by which such impressions arose, must have been something very different from what the spectacle of the scene alone could possibly have produced. The mere sight of actors disguised in masks, suited to express the terrific

yet sublime features of an antique Medusa, with her hair entwined with serpents; the wild and dishevelled appearance, the sable and bloody garments, the blazing torches, the whole apparatus, in short, or properties as they are technically called, with which the classic fancy of Æschylus could invest those terrific personages; nay more, even the appropriate terrors of language and violence of gesture with which they were bodied forth, must still have fallen far short of the point which the poet certainly attained, had it not been for the intimate and solemn conviction of his audience that they were in the performance of an act of devotion, and, to a certain degree, in the presence of the deities themselves. It was this conviction, and the solemn and susceptible temper to which it exalted the minds of a large assembly, which prepared them to receive the electric shock produced by the visible representation of these terrible beings, in whom, whether as personifying the stings and terrors of an awakened conscience, or as mysterious and infernal divinities, the survivors of an elder race of deities, whose presence was supposed to strike awe even into Jove himself, the ancients ascribed the task of pursuing and punishing atrocious guilt.

It was in consistency with this connexion betwixt the Drama and religion of Greece that the principal Grecian tragedians thought themselves entitled to produce upon the stage the most sacred events of their mythological history. It might have been thought that, in doing so, they injured the effect of their fable and action, since suspense and uncertainty, so essential to the interests of a play, could not be supposed to exist where the immortal gods, beings controlling all others, and themselves uncontrolled, were selected as the agents in the piece. But it must be remembered that the synod of Olympus, from Jove downwards, were themselves but limitary deities, possessing, indeed, a certain influence upon human affairs, but unable to stem or divert the tide of fate or destiny, upon whose dark bosom, according to the Grecian creed, gods as well as men were embarked, and both sweeping downwards to some distant, yet inevitable termination of the present system of the universe, which should annihilate at once the race of divinity and of mortality. This awful catastrophe is hinted at not very obscurely by Prometheus, who, when chained to his rock, exults, in his prophetic view, in the destruction of his oppressor Jupiter; and so far did Æschylus, in particular, carry the introduction of religious topics into his Drama, that he escaped with some difficulty from an accusation of having betrayed the Eleusinian mysteries.

Where the subject of the Drama was not actually taken from mythological history, and when the gods themselves did not enter upon the scene, the Grecian stage was, as we have already hinted, usually trod by beings scarcely less awful to the imagination of the audience; the heroes, namely, of their old traditional history, to whom they attributed

an immediate descent from their deities,—a frame of body and mind surpassing humanity, and after death an exaltation into the rank of demi-gods.

It must be added that, even when the action was laid among a less dignified set of personages, still the altar was present on the stage ; incense frequently smoked ; and frequent prayers and obtestations of the Deity reminded the audience that the sports of the ancient theatre had their origin in religious observances. It is scarce necessary to state how widely the classical Drama, in this respect, differs in principle from that of the modern, which pretends to be nothing more than an elegant branch of the fine arts, whose end is attained when it supplies an evening's amusement, whose lessons are only of a moral description, and which is so far from possessing a religious character, that it has, with difficulty, escaped condemnation as a profane, dissolute, and antichristian pastime. From this distinction of principle there flows a difference of practical results, serving to account for many circumstances which might otherwise seem embarrassing.

The ancients, we have seen, endeavoured by every means in their power, including the use of masks and of buskins, to disguise the person of the actor ; and at the expense of sacrificing the expression of his countenance, and the grace, or at least the ease of his form, they removed from the observation of the audience every association which could betray the person of an individual player, under the garb of the deity or hero he was designed to represent. To have done otherwise would have been held indecorous, if not profane. It follows that, as the object of the Athenian and of the modern auditor in attending the theatre was perfectly different, the pleasure which each derived from the representation had a distinct source. Thus, for example, the Englishman's desire to see a particular character is intimately connected with the idea of the actor by whom it was performed. He does not wish to see Hamlet in the abstract, so much as to see how Kemble performs that character, and to compare him, perhaps, with his own recollections of Garrick in the same part. He comes prepared to study each variation of the actor's countenance, each change in his accentuation and deportment ; to note with critical accuracy the points which discriminate his mode of acting from that of others, and to compare the whole with his own abstract of the character. The pleasure arising from this species of critical investigation and contrast is so intimately allied with our ideas of theatrical amusement, that we can scarce admit the possibility of deriving much satisfaction from a representation sustained by an actor, whose personal appearance and peculiar expression of features should be concealed from us, however splendid his declamation, or however appropriate his gesture and action. But this mode of considering the Drama, and the delight which we derive from it, would have appeared to the Greeks a foolish and profane refinement

not very different in point of taste from the expedient of Snug the joiner, who intimated his identity by letting his natural visage be seen, under the mask of the lion which he represented. It was with the direct purpose of concealing the features of the individual actors, as tending to destroy the effect of his theatrical disguise, that the mask and buskin were first invented, and afterwards retained in use. The figure was otherwise so dressed as to represent the Deity or demi-god, according to the statue best known, and adored with most devotion by the Grecian public. The mask was, by artists who were eminent in the plastic art, so formed as to perfect the resemblance. Theseus, or Hercules, stood before the audience, in the very form with which painters and statuaries had taught them to invest the hero, and there was certainly thus gained a more complete scenic deception than could have been obtained in our present mode. It was aided by the distance interposed betwixt the audience and the stage; but, above all, by the influence of enthusiasm acting upon the congregated thousands, whose imaginations, equally lively and susceptible, were prompt to receive the impressions which the noble verse of their authors conveyed to their ears, and the living personification of their gods and demi-gods placed before their eyes.

It is scarcely necessary to add that, while these observations plead their apology for the mask and the buskin of the ancients, they leave where it stood before every objection to those awkward and unseemly disguises, considered in themselves, and without reference to the peculiar purpose and tendency of the ancient theatre. In fact, the exquisite pleasure derived from watching the eloquence of feature, and eye, which we admire in an accomplished actor, was not, as some have supposed, sacrificed by the ancients for the assumption of these disguises. They never did, and, according to the plan of their theatres, never could, possess that source of enjoyment. The circuit of the theatre was immense, and the eyes of the thousands whom it contained were so far removed from the stage, that, far from being able to enjoy the minute play of the actor's features, the mask and buskin were necessary to give distinction to his figure, and to convey all which the ancients expected to see, his general resemblance, namely, to the character he represented.

The style of acting, so far as it has been described to us, corresponded to the other circumstances of the representation. It affected gravity and sublimity of movement and of declamation. Rapidity of motion, and vivacity of action, seem to have been reserved for occasions of particular emotion; and that delicacy of by-play, as well as all the aid which look and slight gesture bring so happily to the aid of an impassioned dialogue, were foreign to their system. The actors, therefore, had an easier task than on the modern stage, since it is much more easy to preserve a tone of high and dignified declamation, than

to follow out the whirlwind and tempest of passion, in which it is demanded of the performer to be energetic without bombast, and natural without vulgarity.

The Grecian actors held a high rank in the republic, and those esteemed in the profession were richly recompensed. Their art was the more dignified, because the poets themselves usually represented the principal character in their own pieces—a circumstance which corroborates what we have already stated concerning the comparative inferiority of talents required in a Grecian actor, who was only expected to move with grace, and declaim with truth and justice. His disguise hid all personal imperfections, and thus a Grecian poet might aspire to become an actor, without that extraordinary and unlikely union of moral and physical powers, which would be necessary to qualify a modern dramatist to mount the stage in person, and excel at once as a poet and as an actor.

It is no part of our present object to enter into any minute examination of the comparative merits of the three great tragedians of Athens, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Never, perhaps, did there arise, within so short a space, such a succession of brilliant talents. Sophocles might, indeed, be said to be the contemporary of both his rivals, for his youthful emulation was excited by the success of Æschylus, and the eminence of his latter years was disturbed by the rivalry of Euripides, whom, however, he survived. To Æschylus, who led the van in dramatic enterprise, as he did in the field of Marathon, the sanction of antiquity has ascribed unrivalled powers over the realms of astonishment and terror. At his summons, the mysterious and tremendous volume of destiny, in which are inscribed the doom of gods and men, seemed to display its leaves of iron before the appalled spectators; the more than mortal voices of Deities, Titans, and departed Heroes, were heard in awful conference; heaven bowed, and its divinities descended; earth yawned, and gave up the pale spectres of the dead; and the yet more undefined and grisly forms of those infernal deities who struck horror into the gods themselves. All this could only be dared and done by a poet of the highest order, confident, during that early age of enthusiasm, that he addressed an audience prompt to kindle at the heroic scene which he placed before them. It followed almost naturally, from his character, that the dramas of Æschylus, though full of terrible interest, should be deficient of grace and softness; that his sublime conciseness should deviate sometimes into harshness and obscurity; that, finding it impossible to sustain himself at the height to which he had ascended, he should sometimes drop, "fluttering his pinions vain," into great inequalities of composition; and, finally, that his plots should appear rude and inartificial, contrasted with those of his successors in the dramatic art. Still, however, Æschylus led not only the way in the noble career of the Grecian

drama, but outstripped, in point of sublimity at least, those by whom he was followed.

Sophocles, who obtained from his countrymen the title of the *Bee* of Attica, rivalled Æschylus when in the possession of the stage, and obtained the first prize. His success occasioned the veteran's retreat to Sicily, where he died, commanding that his epitaph should make mention of his share in the victory of Marathon, but should contain no allusion to his dramatic excellencies. His more fortunate rival judiciously avoided the dizzy and terrific path which Æschylus had trod with so firm and daring a step. It was the object of Sophocles to move sorrow and compassion rather than to excite indignation and terror. He studied the progress of action with more attention than Æschylus, and excelled in that modulation of the story by which interest is excited at the beginning of a drama, maintained in its progress, and gratified at its conclusion. His subjects are also of a nature more melancholy and less sublime than those of his predecessors. He loved to paint heroes rather in their forlorn than in their triumphant fortunes, aware that the contrast offered new sources of the pathetic to the author. Sophocles was the most fortunate of the Greek tragedians. He attained the age of ninety-one years; and in his eightieth, to vindicate himself from a charge of mental imbecility, he read to the judges his *Œdipus Coloneus* the most beautiful, at least the most perfect, of his tragedies. He survived Euripides, his formidable rival, of whom, also, we must speak a few words.

It is observed by Schlegel, that the tone of the tragedies of Euripides approaches more nearly to modern taste than to the stern simplicity of his predecessors. The passion of love predominates in his pieces, and he is the first tragedian who paid tribute to that sentiment which has been too exclusively made the moving cause of interest on the modern stage,—the first who sacrificed to

“Cupid, king of gods and men.”

The dramatic use of this passion has been purified in modern times, by the introduction of that tone of feeling, which, since the age of Chivalry, has been a principal ingredient in heroic affection. This was unknown to the ancients, in whose society females, generally speaking, held a low and degrading place, from which few individuals emerged, unless those who aspired to the talents and virtues proper to the masculine sex. Women were not forbidden to become competitors for the laurel or oaken crown offered to genius and to patriotism; but antiquity held out no myrtle wreath, as a prize for the domestic virtues peculiar to the female character. Love, therefore, in Euripides, does not always breathe purity of sentiment, but is stained with the mixture of violent and degrading passions. This, however, was the fault of the age, rather than of the poet, although he is generally represented

as an enemy of the female sex ; and his death was ascribed to a judgment of Venus.

“ When blood-hounds met him by the way,
And monsters made the bard their prey.”

This great dramatist was less happy than Sophocles in the construction of his plots ; and, instead of the happy expedients by which his predecessor introduces us to the business of the drama, he had too often recourse to the mediation of a prologue, who came forth to explain, in detail, the previous history necessary to understand the piece.

Euripides is also accused of having degraded the character of his personages, by admitting more alloy of human weakness, folly, and vice, than was consistent with the high qualities of the heroic age. Æschylus, it was said, transported his audience into a new and more sublime race of beings ; Sophocles painted mankind as they ought to be, and Euripides as they actually are. Yet the variety of character introduced by the latter tragedian, and the interest of his tragedies, must always attract the modern reader, coloured as they are by a tone of sentiment, and by his knowledge of the business, rules, and habits, of actual life, to which his predecessors, living as they did, in an imaginary and heroical world of their own, appear to have been strangers. And although the judgment of the ancients assigned the pre-eminence in tragedy to Æschylus or Sophocles, yet Euripides has been found more popular with posterity than either of his two great predecessors.

The division betwixt tragedy and comedy, for both sprung from the same common origin, the feasts, namely, in honour of Bacchus, and the disguise adopted by his worshippers, seems to have taken place gradually, until the jests and frolics, which made a principal part of these revels, were found misplaced when introduced with graver matter, and were made by Susarion, perhaps the subject of a separate province of the Drama. The Grecian comedy was divided into the ancient, the middle, and the modern, style of composition.

The ancient and original comedy was of a kind which may, at first sight, appear to derogate from the religious purposes which we have pointed out as the foundations of the Drama. They frequently turn upon parodies, in which the persons and adventurers of those gods and heroes who were the sublime subjects of the tragic Drama, are introduced for the purpose of buffoon-sport, and ridicule, as in Carey's modern farces of *Midas* and the *Golden Pippin*. Hercules appears in one of those pieces astonishing his host by an extravagant appetite, which the cook in vain attempts to satiate, by placing before him, in succession, all the various dishes which the ancient kitchen afforded. In another comedy, Bacchus (in whose honour the solemnity was instituted) is brought in only to ridicule his extreme cowardice.

At other times, allowing a grotesque fancy its wildest range, the early comic authors introduced upon the stage animals, and even inanimate things, as part of their *dramatis personæ*, and embodied forth on the stage, the fantastic imaginations of Lucian in his *True History*. The golden age was represented in the same ridiculous and bizarre mode of description as the *Pays de la Cocaigne* of the French minstrels, or the popular ideas of *Lubberland* in England; and the poets furnished kingdoms of birds and worlds in the moon.

Had the only charm of these entertainments consisted in the fantastic display with which the eyes of the spectators were regaled at the expense of the over-excited imagination of the poet, they would soon have fallen into disuse; for the Athenians were too acute and judicious critics, to have been long gratified with mere extravagance. But these grotesque scenes were made the medium for throwing the most bold and daring ridicule upon the measures of the stage, upon the opinions of individuals, and upon the religion of the country.

This propensity to turn into ridicule that which is most serious and sacred, had probably its origin in the rude gambols of the silvan deities who accompanied Bacchus, and to whose petulant and lively demeanour rude jest was a natural accompaniment. The audience, at least the more ignorant part of them, saw these parodies with pleasure, which equalled the awe they felt at the performance of the tragedies, whose most solemn subjects were thus burlesqued; nor do they appear to have been checked by any sense that their mirth was profane. In fact, when the religion of a nation comes to consist chiefly in the practice of a few unmeaning ceremonies, it is often found that the populace, with whatever inconsistency, assume the liberty of profaning them by grotesque parodies, without losing their reverence for the superstitions which they thus vilify. Customs of a like tendency were common in the middle ages. The festival of the Ass in France, of the Boy-Bishop in England, of the Abbot of Unreason in Scotland, and many other popular practices of the same kind, exhibited, in countries yet Catholic, daring parodies of the most sacred services and ceremonies of the Roman Church. And as these were practised openly, and under authority, without being supposed to shake the people's attachment to the rites which they thus ridiculed, we cannot wonder that similar profanities were well received among the Pagans, whose religion sat very loosely upon them, and who professed no fixed or necessary articles of faith.

It is probable that, had the old Grecian comedy continued to direct its shafts of ridicule only against the inhabitants of Olympus, it would not have attracted the coercion of the magistracy. But its kingdom was far more extensive, and the poets, claiming the privilege of laying their opinions on public affairs before the people in this shape, Cratinus, Eupolis, and particularly Aristophanes, a daring, powerful, and appa-

rently unprincipled writer, converted comedy into an engine for assailing the credit and character of private individuals, as well as the persons and political measures of those who administered the state. The doctrines of philosophy, the power of the magistrate, the genius of the poet, the rites proper to the Deity, were alternately made the subject of the most uncompromising and severe satire. It was soon discovered, that the more directly personal the assault could be made, and the more revered or exalted the personage, the greater was the malignant satisfaction of the audience, who loved to see wisdom, authority, and religious reverence, brought down to their own level, and made subjects of ridicule by the powers of the merciless satirist. The use of the mask enabled Aristophanes to render his satire yet more pointedly personal ; for, by forming it so as to imitate, probably with some absurd exaggeration, the features of the object of his ridicule, and by imitating the dress and manner of the original, the player stepped upon the stage, a walking and speaking caricature of the hero of the night, and usually placed in some ludicrous position, amidst the fanciful and whimsical chimeras with which the scene was peopled.

In this manner, Aristophanes ridiculed with equal freedom Socrates, the wisest of the Athenians, and Cleon; the demagogue, when at the height of his power. As no one durst perform the latter part, for fear of giving offence to one so powerful, the author acted Cleon himself, with his face smeared with the lees of wine. Like the satire of Rabelais, the political and personal invective of Aristophanes was mingled with a plentiful allowance of scurril and indecent jests, which were calculated to ensure a favourable reception from the bulk of the people. He resembles Rabelais also, in the wild and fanciful fictions which he assumes as the vehicle of his satire ; and his comedy of *The Birds* may even have given hints to Swift, when, in order to contrast the order of existing institutions with those of a Utopian and fantastic fairy land, he carries Gulliver among giants and pigmies. Yet though his indecency, and the offensive and the indiscriminate scurrility of his satire, deserve censure ; though he merits the blame of the wise for his attack upon Socrates, and of the learned for his repeated and envenomed assaults upon Euripides, Aristophanes has nevertheless added one deathless name to the deathless period in which he flourished ; and, from the richness of his fancy, and gaiety of his tone, has deserved the title of the Father of Comedy. When the style of his sarcasm possessed the rareness of novelty, it was considered of so much importance to the state, that a crown of olive was voted to the poet, as one who had taught Athens the defects of her public men. But unless angels were to write satires, ridicule cannot be considered as the test of truth. The temptation to be witty is just so much the more irresistible, that the author knows he will get no thanks for suppressing the jest which rises to his pen. As the public becomes used to this

new and piquant fare, fresh characters must be sacrificed for its gratification. Recrimination adds commonly to the contest, and those who were at first ridiculed out of mere wantonness of wit, are soon persecuted for resenting the ill usage ; until literature resembles an actual personal conflict, where the victory is borne away by the strongest and most savage, who deals the most desperate wounds with the least sympathy for the feeling of his adversary.

The ancient comedy was of a character too licentious to be long tolerated. Two or three decrees having been in vain passed, in order to protect the citizen against libels of this poignant description, the ancient comedy was finally proscribed by that oligarchy, which assumed the sway over Athens, upon the downfall of the popular government towards the end of the Peloponnesian war. By orders of these rulers, Anaxander, an actor, was punished capitally, for parodying a line of Euripides, so as to infer a slight of the government. He was starved to death, to which, as an appropriate punishment, the public has since his time often indirectly condemned both actors and dramatists. Aristophanes, who was still alive, bowed to the storm, and relinquished the critical and satirical scourge, which he had hitherto exercised in the combined capacity of satirist, reformer, and reviewer ; and the use of the Chorus was prohibited to comic authors, as it seems to have been in their stanzas chiefly that the offensive satire was invested. To this edict Horace alludes in the well-known lines :

" Successit vetus his comedia, none sine multa
Laude, sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim
Dignam lege regi : lex est accepta : Chorusque
Turpiter obtulit, sublato jure nocendi."

In the middle comedy, Thalia and her votaries seemed to have retraced their steps, and, avoiding personal satire, resorted once more to general subjects of burlesque raillery. We learn from history, real or fabulous, or from the works of the elder poets, that these plays had the fanciful wildness without the personal satire of the ancient comedy, for the authors were obliged to take care that there was no " offence " in their pleasantry. At most they only ventured to touch on matters of interest in the way of inuendo, under feigned titles and oblique hints, and had no longer the audacity to join men's vices or follies to their names. Aristophanes recast several of his pieces in this manner. But the same food, without the poignant seasoning to which the audience had been accustomed, palled on their taste, and this cast of pieces soon

* The ancient comedy next play'd its part,
Well-famed, at first, for spirit and for art ;
But Liberty o'erleaping decent awe,
Satiric rage required restraint from law.
The edict spoke, — dishonour'd silence bound
The Chorus, and forbade their ancient right to wound.

gave place to that which the ancients called the New Comedy, so successfully cultivated by Menander and others.

Notwithstanding what modern critics have said to the contrary, and particularly the ingenious Schlegel, the new tone which comedy thus assumed, seems more congenial to true taste as well as to public decorum, and even to the peace and security of the community, than that of Aristophanes, whose satiric wit, like a furious bull, charged upon his countrymen without respect or distinction, and tossed and gored whatever he met in his way.

The new comedy had for its object the ludicrous incidents of private life,—*celebrare domestica facta*, says Horace,—to detail those foibles, follies, and whimsical accidents, which are circumstances material and serious to the agents themselves, but, as very usually happens on the stage of the world, matters only of ludicrous interest to the on-lookers. The new comedy admitted also many incidents of a character not purely ludicrous, and some which, calling forth pathetic emotion, approached more nearly to the character of tragedy than had been admitted in the ancient comedies of Aristophanes, and in this rather resembled what the French have called *Tragédie Bourgeoise*. It is scarce necessary to remark, that the line cannot be always distinctly drawn betwixt the subjects which excite mirth and those which call forth sympathy. It often happens that the same incident is at once affecting and ludicrous, or admits of being presented alternately in either point of view. In a Drama, also, which treats of the faults and lighter vices, as well as of the follies of mankind, it is natural that the author should sometimes assume the high tone of the moralist. In these cases, to use the language of Horace, comedy exalts her voice, and the offended father, the pantaloon of the piece, swells into sublimity of language. A pleasant species of composition was thus attained, in which wit and humour were relieved by touches both of sentiment and moral instruction. The new comedy, taken in this enlarged point of view, formed the introduction to the Modern Drama; but it was neither so comprehensive in its plan, nor so various in character and interest.

The form which the Greeks, and in imitation of them the Romans, adopted, for embodying their comic effusions, was neither extended nor artificial. To avoid the charge of assaulting, or perhaps the temptation to attack private persons, the actors in their drama were rather painted as personifications of particular classes of society, than living individual characters. The list of these personages was sufficiently meagre. The principal character, upon whose devices and ingenuity the whole plot usually turns, is the Geta of the piece, a witty, roguish, insinuating, and malignant slave, the confidant of a wild and extravagant son, whom he aids in his pious endeavours to cheat a suspicious, severe, and griping father. When to these three are added, a wily courtesan, a procuress, a stolen virgin, who is generally a mute or nearly

such, we have all the stock-characters which are proper to the classic comedy. Upon this limited scale of notes the ancients rung their changes, relieving them occasionally, however, by the introduction of a boastful soldier, a boorish clown, or a mild and good-natured old man, to contrast with the irascible Chremes of the piece, the more ordinary representative of old age.

The plot is in general as simple as the cast of the characters. A father loses his child, who falls into the hands of a procuress or slave-merchant. The efforts of the youth, who falls in love with this captive, to ransom her from her captivity, are seconded by the slave, who aids him in the various devices necessary to extort from his father the funds necessary for the purchase, and their tricks form the principal part of the intrigue. When it is necessary that the play shall close, the discovery of the girl's birth takes place, and the young couple are married. The plots are, indeed, sometimes extended or enlarged by additional circumstances, but very seldom by any novelty of character or variety of general form.

It is a necessary consequence, that the ancient comic authors were confined within a very narrow compass. The vast and inexhaustible variety of knavery, folly, affectation, humour, &c. &c., as mingled with each other, or as modified by difference of age, sex, temper, education, profession, and habit of body, are all within the royalty of the modern comic dramatist, and he may summon them up under what limitations and in what circumstances he pleases, to play their parts in his piece. The ancients were much more limited in their circle of materials, and, perhaps, we must look for the ruling cause, once more, in the great size of their theatres, and to the use of the mask ; which, though it easily presented the general or generic character of the personage introduced, was incapable of the endless variety which can be given to ridicule of a more minute, refined, and personal kind, by the flexible organs of a modern actor.

But besides this powerful reason for refraining from any attempt to draw characters distinguished by peculiar habits, there is much reason to think that the mode of life pursued by the ancient Athenians was unfavourable to the formation of whimsical, original, or eccentric characters. Citizens of the same state, they lived much together, and the differences of ranks did not make the same distinction in taste and manners as in modern Europe. The occupation was also the same. They were all public men, and had a common interest in the management of the state ; and it probably followed, that, in men whose thoughts and pursuits were all bent the same way, the same general similarity of manners might be found to exist, which is remarked in those who follow the same profession. The differences of youth and age, of riches and poverty, of good or bad temper, &c. must have been much modified in Attica, where all free citizens were, to a certain degree, on a level,—

discussed the same topics of state, and gave the same vote to forward them—enjoyed without restriction the same public amusements,—and where the same general cast of manners might descend to the lowest of the citizens, for the very reason that even a poor herb-woman understands the delicacy of the Attic dialect so perfectly, as to distinguish a stranger by the first words he addressed to her.

The Chorus, silenced, as we have seen, owing to the license of the old comedy, made no appendage to that which was substituted in its place. The exhibition of the Grecian comedy did not, in other respects, in so far as we know, materially differ from that of the tragedy. Instead of the choral interludes, the representation was now divided, by intervals of cessation, into acts, as upon the modern stage. And the number *five* seems to have been fixed upon as the most convenient and best adapted for the purposes of representation. The plot, as we have seen, and the distinct and discriminated specification of character, were, in either case, subordinate considerations to the force of style and composition. It follows, of consequence, that we can better understand and enjoy the tragedies than the comedies of the ancients. The circumstances which excite sublime or terrific sensations are the same, notwithstanding the difference of age, country and language. But comic humour is of a character much more evanescent. The force of wit depends almost entirely upon time, circumstance, and manners; in so much, that a jest which raises inextinguishable laughter in a particular class of society appears flat or disgusting if uttered in another. It is, therefore, no wonder that the ancient comedy, turning upon manners so far removed from our own time, should appear to us rather dull and inartificial. The nature of the intercourse between the sexes in classic times was also unfavourable for comedy. The coquette, the fine lady, the romp, all those various shades of the female character, which occupy so many pleasant scenes on the modern stage, were totally unknown to ancient manners. The wife of the ancient comedy was a mere household drudge, the vassal, not the companion of an imperious husband. The young woman, whose beauty is the acting motive of the intrigue, never evinces the slightest intellectual property of any kind. And the only female character admitting of some vivacity, is that of the courtesan, whose wit as well as her charms, appear to have been professional.

After subtracting the large field afforded by female art or caprice, female wit, or folly, or affection, the realm of the ancient comedy will appear much circumscribed; and we have yet to estimate a large deduction to be made on account of the rust of antiquity, and the total change of religion and manners. It is no wonder, therefore, that the wit of Plautus and Terence should come forth diminished in weight and substance, after having been subjected to the alembic of modern criticism. That which survives the investigation, however, is of a solid

and valuable character. If these Dramas do not entertain us with a display of the specific varieties of character, they often convey maxims evincing a deep knowledge of human passion and feeling ; and are so admirably adapted to express, in few and pithy words, truths which it is important to remember, that even the Apostle Paul himself has not disdained to quote a passage from a Grecian dramatist. The situation, also, of their personages is often truly comic ; and the modern writers who have borrowed their ideas, and arranged them according to the taste of their own age, have been indebted to the ancients for the principal causes of their success.

Having dwelt thus long upon the Grecian Drama, we are entitled to treat with conciseness that of Rome, which, like the other fine arts, that people, rather martial than literary, copied from their more ingenious neighbours.

The Romans were not, indeed, without a sort of rude dramatic representation of their own, of the same nature with that which, as we have already noticed, usually rises in an early period of society. These were called *Fabulæ Atellanæ*; farces, for such they were, which took their name from *Atella*, a town belonging to the *Osci* in Italy. They were performed by the Roman youth, who used to attack each other with satirical couplets during the intervals of some rude game in which they seem to have represented the characters of fabulous antiquity. But 361 years before the Christian era, the Romans, in the time of a great pestilence, as we learn from Livy, introduced a more regular species of theatrical entertainment, in order to propitiate the deities by a solemn exhibition of public games ; after which, what had hitherto been matter of mere frolic and amusement, assumed, according to the historian, the appearance of a professional art ; and the Roman youth, who had hitherto appeared as amateur performers, gave up the stage to regular actors.

These plays continued, however, to be of a very rude structure, until the Grecian stage was transplanted to Rome. Livius Andronicus, by birth a Grecian, led the way in this improvement, and is accounted her first dramatist.

Seneca, the philosopher, is the only Roman tragedian whose works have reached our time. His tragedies afford no very favourable specimen of Roman art. They are in the false taste which succeeded the age of Augustus, and debased the style of composition in that of Nero ; bombastic, tedious, and pedantic ; treating, indeed, of Grecian subjects, but not with Grecian art.

By a singular contrast, although we have lost the more valuable tragedies of Rome, we have been compelled to judge of the new Greek comedy, through the medium of the Latin translations. Of Menander we have but a few fragments, and our examples of his Drama are de-

rived exclusively from Plautus and Terence. Of these, the former appears the more original, the latter the more elegant author. The comedies of Plautus are much more connected with manners,—much more full of what may be termed drollery and comic situation,—and are believed to possess a greater portion of Roman character. The Romans, indeed, had two species of comedy, the *Palliata*, where the scene and dress were Grecian; the *Togata*, where both were Roman. But besides this distinction, even the *Mantled*, or Grecian comedy, might be more or less of a Roman cast; and Plautus is supposed to have infused a much stronger national tone into his plays than can be traced in those of Terence. They are also of a ruder cast, and more extravagant, retaining, perhaps, a larger portion of the rough horse-play peculiar to the *Fabulæ Atellana*. Terence, on the contrary, is elegant, refined, and sententious; decorous and regular in the construction of his plots; exhibiting more of wit in his dialogue, than of comic force in his situations; grave often and moral; sometimes even pathetic; and furnishing, upon the whole, the most perfect specimen of the Grecian comedy, both in action and character.

The alterations which the Romans made in the practice of the theatrical art do not seem to have been of great consequence. One circumstance, however, deserves notice. The orchestra, or, as we should say, the pit of the theatre, was no longer left vacant for the occasional occupation of the Chorus, but was filled with the senators, knights, and other more respectable citizens. The stage was thus brought more near to the eye of the higher class of the audience. It would also seem that the theatres were smaller; for we read of two so constructed, that each turned upon a pivot, so that, when placed back to back, they were separate theatres, yet were capable of being wheeled round, with all the audience, so as to bring their oblong ends together, then forming a single amphitheatre, in which the games of the circus succeeded to dramatic representation. It is not easy to conceive the existence of such machinery; but the story, at any rate, seems to show, that their theatres must have been greatly smaller than those of Greece, to admit the supposition of such an evolution as being in any degree practicable. This diminution in the size of the house, and the occupation of the orchestra by the most dignified part of the audience, may have afforded a reason why masks were, at least occasionally, disused on the Roman stage. That they were sometimes disused is certain; for Cicero mentions Roscius Gallus as using a mask to conceal a deformity arising from the inequality of his eyes, which implies plainly that other comedians played with their faces disclosed. It is therefore probable, that the imperfections of the mask were felt, so soon as the distance was diminished between the performer and the spectators; and we may hazard a conjecture, that this disguise was first laid aside in the smaller theatres.

But the principal change introduced by the Romans into the Drama, and which continues to effect it in every country of Europe, respected the *status* or rank of the actors in society. We have seen that Athens, enthusiastic in her attachment to the fine arts, held no circumstances degrading which were connected with them. Æschylus and Sophocles were soldiers and statesmen, yet lost nothing in the opinion of their countrymen, by appearing on the public stage. Euripides, who was also a person of consequence, proved that "love esteems no office mean ;" for he danced in a female disguise in his own Drama, and that not as the Princess Nauticlea, but as one of her handmaidens, or, in modern phrase, as a *figurante*. The Grecians, therefore, attached no dishonour to the person of the actor, nor esteemed that he who contributed to giving the amusement of the theatre, was at all degraded beneath those who received it. It was otherwise in Rome. The contempt which the Romans entertained for players might be founded partly upon their confounding this elegant amusement with the games of the Circus and amphitheatre, performed by gladiators and slaves, the meanest, in short, of mankind. Hence, to use the words of St. Augustin, "the ancient Romans, accounting the art of stage-playing and the whole scene infamous, ordained that this sort of men should not only want the honour of other citizens, but also be disfranchised and thrust out of their tribe, by a legal and disgraceful censure, which the censors were to execute ; because they would not suffer their vulgar sort of people, much less their senators, to be defamed, disgraced, or defiled with stage-players ;" which act of theirs he styles "an excellent true Roman prudence, to be enumerated among the Roman's praises."

Accordingly, an edict of the prætor stigmatized as infamous all who appeared on the stage, either to speak or act ; but it is remarkable that from this general proscription the Roman youth were excepted ; and they continued to enact the *Fabula Atellana*, namely, the farces or drolleries of ancient Italian origin, without incurring any stigma. This exception seems to indicate, that the edict originated in the national pride of the Romans, and their contempt for Grecian literature, and for foreigners of every description. Under any other view it is impossible they should have preferred the actors in these coarse farces, who, by the by, are supposed to have been the originals of no less persons than Harlequin and Punchinello, to those who possessed taste and talents sufficient to execute the masterly scenes, borrowed from the Grecian Drama.

Injustice, however,—and we call that law unjust which devotes to general infamy any profession of which it nevertheless tolerates the practice,—is usually inconsistent. Several individual play-actors in Rome rose to high public esteem, and to the enjoyment of great wealth. Roscius was the friend and companion of Piso and of Sylla,

and, what was still more to his credit, of Cicero himself, who thus eulogises the scenic art, while commemorating the merits of his deceased friend :—" *Quis nostrum tam animo agresti ac duro fuit, ut Roscii morte nuper non commoveretur ; qui quum esset senex mortuus, tamen, propter excellentem artem ac venustatem, videbatur omnino mori non debuisse ?*"

Paris, another Roman actor, reached a height of celebrity as distinguished as Roscius, and exercised, as many of his profession have since done, an arbitrary authority over the unfortunate dramatic authors. It is recorded by the satirist, that Statius the epic poet might have starved, had he not given up to this favourite of the public, upon his own terms doubtless, the manuscript of an unacted performance. Paris was put to death by Domitian out of jealousy.

If the actors rose to be persons of importance in Rome, the dramatic critics were not less so. They had formed a code of laws for the regulation of dramatic authors to which the great names of Aristotle and Horace both contributed their authority. But these will be more properly treated of when we come to mention the adoption of the ancient regulations by the French stage.

Having thus gone hastily through some accounts of the ancient stage, from its rise in Greece to its transportation to Rome, we have only to notice the circumstances under which it expired.

Christianity from its first origin was inimical to the institution of the stage. The Fathers of the Church inveigh against the profaneness and immodesty of the theatre. In the treatise of Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, he has written expressly upon the subject. The various authorities on this head have been collected and quoted by the enemies of the stage, from Prynne down to Collier. It ought, however, to be noticed, that their exprobration of the theatre is founded, first, upon its origin, as connected with heathen superstition ; and secondly, on the beastly and abominable license practised in the pantomimes, which, although they made no part of the regular Drama, were represented nevertheless in the same place, and before the same audience. "We avoid your shows and games," says Tertullian, "because we doubt the warrant of their origin. They savour of superstition and idolatry, and we dislike the entertainment, as abhorring the heathen religion on which it is founded." In another place he observes, the temples were united to theatres, in order that superstition might patronise debauchery, and that they were dedicated to Bacchus and to Venus, the confederate deities of lust and intemperance.

It was not only the connexion of the theatre with heathen superstition, that offended the primitive Church ; but also the profligacy of some of the entertainments which were exhibited. There cannot be much objected to the regular Roman Dramas in this particular, since

even Mr. Collier allows them to be more decorous than the British stage of his own time ; but, as we have already hinted, in the *Ludi Scenici*, the intrigues of the gods and the heroes were represented upon the stage with the utmost grossness. These obscene and scandalous performances thus far coincided with the Drama, that they were acted in the same theatres, and in honour of the same deities, and both were subjected to the same sweeping condemnation. They were not, however, absolutely or formally abolished, even when Christianity became the religion of the State. Tertullian and St. Austin both speak of the scenic representations of their own day, under the distinct characters of tragedy and comedy ; and although condemned by the Church, and abhorred by the more strict Christians, there is little doubt that the ancient theatre continued to exist, until it was buried under the ruins of the Roman Empire.

THE MODERN DRAMA.

The same propensity to fictitious personification, which we have remarked as common to all countries, introduced, during the dark ages, a rude species of Drama into most of the nations of Europe. Like the first efforts of the ancients in that art, it had its foundation in religion ; with this great difference, that as the rites of Bacchus before, and even after the improvements introduced by Thespis, were well enough suited to the worship of such a deity, the religious Dramas, mysteries, or whatever other name they assumed, were often so unworthy of the Christian religion, on which they were founded, that their being tolerated can be attributed only to the gross ignorance of the laity, and the cunning of the Catholic priesthood, who used them, with other idle and sometimes indecorous solemnities, as one means of amusing the people's minds, and detaining them in contented bondage to their spiritual superiors.

In the Empire of the East, religious exhibitions of a theatrical character appear to have been instituted about the year 990, by Theophylact, patriarch of Constantinople, with the intention (Warton surmises) of weaning the minds of the people from the Pagan revels, by substituting Christian spectacles, partaking of the same spirit of license. His contemporaries give him little credit for his good intentions. "Theophylact," says Cedrenus, as translated by Warton, "introduced the practice, which prevails to this day, of scandalizing God and the memory of his saints, on the most splendid and popular festivals, by indecent and ridiculous songs, and enormous shoutings, even in the midst of those sacred hymns which we ought to offer to divine grace for the salvation of our souls. But he having connected a company of base fellows, and placing over them one Euthynicus surnamed Casnes, whom he also appointed the superintendent of his church, admitted into the sacred service diabolical dances, exclamations of

ribaldry, and ballads borrowed from the streets and brothels.”—The irregularities of the Greek clergy, who, on certain holidays, personated feigned characters, and entered even the choir in masquerade, are elsewhere mentioned. (Warton’s *History of English Poetry*, vol. ii., p. 370.) These passages do not prove that actual mysteries or sacred Dramas were enacted on such occasions; but probably the indecent revels alluded to bore the same relation to such representations, as the original rites of Bacchus to the more refined exhibitions of Thespis and Susarion.

There has been some dispute among theatrical antiquaries, in which country of Europe dramatic representations of a religious kind first appeared. The liberal and ingenious editor of the *Chester Mysteries* has well remarked, (in his introduction to that curious and beautiful volume,) that a difficulty must always attend the inquiry, from the doubts that exist, whether the earliest recorded performances of each country were merely pantomimes, or were accompanied with dialogue.

The practice of processions and pageants with music, in which characters, chiefly of sacred writ, were presented before the public, is so immediately connected with that of speaking exhibitions, that it is difficult to discriminate the one from the other.

We are tempted to look first to Italy; as it is natural that the tragic art should have revived in that country in which it was last exercised, and where traditions, and perhaps some faint traces, of its existence were still preserved.

“The first speaking sacred Drama,” says Mr. Walker, “was *Della Passione di nostra Signore Gesu Christo*, by Giuliano Dati, Bishop of San Leo, who flourished about the year 1445.” (Walker’s *Essay on the Revival of the Drama in Italy*, p. 6.) This elegant author does, indeed, show that Italian scholars, and particularly Muscato, the Paduan historian, had composed two Latin Dramas upon something like the classical model, about the year 1300. Yet, although his play upon the tyranny and death of Ezzlino obtained him both reputation and honour, it does not appear to have been composed for the stage, but rather to have been a dramatic poem, the progress of the piece being often interrupted by the poet speaking in his own person.

The French Drama is traced by M. Le Grand as high as the thirteenth century; and he has produced one curious example of a pastoral, entitled *Un Jeu*. He mentions also a farce, two devotional pieces, and two moralities, to each of which he ascribes the same title. It may be suspected, that these are only dialogues recited by the travelling minstrels and troubadours; such as Petrarch acknowledges having sometimes composed for the benefit of the strolling musicians. Such were probably the spectacles exhibited by Philip the Fair in 1313, on account of the honour of knighthood conferred on his children. Riccoboni, anxious for the honour of Italy, denies to these amusements the

character of a legitimate Drama ; with what justice we have no information that can enable us to decide.

Amidst this uncertainty, it is not unpleasant to record the fair claim which Britain possesses to be one of the earliest, if not the very first nation in which dramatic representation seems to have been revived. The *Chester Mysteries*, called the *Whitsun Plays*, appear to have been performed during the mayoralty of John Arneway, who filled that office in Chester from 1268 to 1276. The very curious specimen of these Mysteries, which has been of late printed for private distribution by Mr. Markland of the Temple, furnishes us with the banns, or proclamation, containing the history and character of the pageants which it announces.

Reverende lordes and ladyes all,
That at this time here assembled bee,
By this messuage understande you shall,
That sometymes there was mayor of this citie,
Sir John Arnway, Knyghte, who most worthilye
Contented himselfe to set out an playe
The devise of one Done Randali, moonke of Chester Abbey.

" This moonke, moonke-like, in scriptures well seene,
In storyes travelled with the best sorte ;
In pagentes set fourth, apparently to all eyne,
The Olde and Newe Testament with livelye comforte ;
Intermynglinge therewith, onely to make sporte,
Some things not warranted by any writt,
Which to gladd the hearers he woulde men to take yt.

" This matter he abrevited into playes twenty-foure,
And every playe of the matter gave but a taste,
Leavinge for better learninges circumstances to accomlishe,
For his proceedinges maye appeare to be in haste :
Yet all together unprofitable his labour he did not waste,
For at this daye, and ever, he deserveth the fame
Which all moonkes deserve professinge that name.

" This worthy Knyghte Arnway, then mayor of this citie,
This order toke, as declare to you I shall,
That by twenty-fower occupations, artes, craftes, or misteries,
These pagentes shoulde be played after breeffe rehearsall ;
For every pagente a cariage to be provyded withall,
In which sorte we purpose this Whitsontyde,
Our pagentes into three partes to devyde.

" 1. Now you worshippful TANNERS that of custume olde
The fall of Lucifer did set out,
Some writers awarrante your matter, therefore be bould
Lustelye to playe the same to all the rowtte ;
And yf any thereof stand in any doubte,
Your author his author hath, your shewe let bee,
Good speech, fyne players, with apparill comelye."

(*Chester Mysteries.*)

Such were the celebrated *Mysteries of Chester*. To Mr. Markland's extracts from them is prefixed a curious dissertation upon their age and author. They were so highly popular as to be ranked in the esti-

mation of the vulgar with the ballads of Robin Hood ; for a character in one of the old moralities is introduced as boasting,

“ I can rhimes of Robin Hood, and Randal of Chester,
But of our Lord and our Lady I can nought at all.”

The poetical value of these Mysteries is never considerable, though they are to be found among the dramatic antiquities of all parts of Europe. It was, however, soon discovered that the purity of the Christian religion was inconsistent with these rude games, in which passages from Scripture were profanely and indecently mingled with human inventions of a very rude, and sometimes an indecorous character. To the Mysteries, therefore, succeeded the Moralities, a species of dramatic exercise, which involved more art and ingenuity, and was besides much more proper for a public amusement, than the imitations or rather parodies of Sacred History, which had hitherto entertained the public.

These Moralities bear some analogy to the old or original comedy of the ancients. They were often founded upon allegorical subjects, and almost always bore a close and poignant allusion to the incidents of the day. Public reformation was their avowed object, and, of course, satire was frequently the implement which they employed. Dr. Percy, however, remarks that they were of two characters, serious and ludicrous ; the one approaching to the tragedy, the other to the comedy of classical times ; so that they brought taste as it were to the threshold of the real Drama. The difference betwixt the Catholic and Reformed religion was fiercely disputed in some of these Dramas ; and in Scotland, in particular, a mortal blow was aimed at the superstitions of the Roman Church, by the celebrated Sir David Lindsay, in a play or Morality acted in 1539, and entitled *The Satire of the Three Estates*. The objects of this Drama were entirely political, although it is mixed with some comic scenes, and introduced by an interlude, in coarseness altogether unmatched. The spirit of Aristophanes, in all its good and evil, seems to have actuated the Scottish King-at-arms. It is a singular proof of the liberty allowed to such representations at the period, that James V. and his queen repeatedly witnessed a piece, in which the corruptions of the existing government and religion were treated with such satirical severity. The play, as acted, seems to have differed in some respects from the state in which it exists in manuscript.

In a letter to the Lord Privy Seal of England, dated 26th January, 1540, SIR WILLIAM EURE (ENVOY FROM HENRY VIII.,) gives the following account of the play, as it had then been performed :

“ In the feast of Ehipane at Lightgowe, before the king, queene, and the whole counsaile, spirituall and temporall.—In the firste entres come in SOLACE, (whose parte was but to make mery, sing ballets with his fellowes, and drink at the interluydes of the play,) whoe showed firste to all the audience the play to be played. Next come in a king,

who passed to his throne, having nae speche to thende of the play, and then to ratify and approve, as in Parliament, all things done by the rest of the players, which represented THE THREE ESTATES. With him came his cortiers, PLACEBO, PICTHANK, and FLATTERYE, and sic alike gard : one swering he was the lustiest, starkeste, best proportionit, and most valeyant man that ever was ; and ane other swore he was the beste with long-bowe, crosse-bowe, and culverin, and so fourth. Thairafter there come a man armed in harness, with a swerde drawn in his hande, a BUSHOP, a BURGES-MAN, and EXPERIENCE, clede like a DOCTOR ; who set them all down on the deis under the KING. After them come a POOR MAN, who did go up and down the scaffolde, making a hevie complainte that he was hereyet, throw the courtiers taking his fewe in one place, and his tackes in another : wherthrough he had sceyled his house, his wyfe and childrene beggyng thair brede, and so of many thousands in Scotland ; saying thair was no remedy to be gotten, as he was neither acquainted with controller nor treasurer. And then he looked to the King, and said he was not king in Scotland, fore there was ane other king in Scotland that hanged JOHNE ARMSTRANG, with his fellowes, SYM THE LAIRD, and mony other mae ; but he had lefte ane thing undone. Then he made a long narracione of the oppression of the poor, by the taking of the corse-presaunte beists, and of the herrying of poor men by the consistorye lawe, and of many other abusions of the SPIRITUALITIE and Church. Then the BUSHOP raise and rebuked him. Then the MAN OF ARMES alledged the contraire, and commanded the poor man to go on. The poor man proceeds with a long list of the bushop's evil practices, the vices of cloisters, &c. This proved by EXPERIENCE, who, from a New Testament, shows the office of a bushop. The MAN OF ARMES and the BURGES approve of all that was said against the clergy, and alledge the expediency of a reform, with the consent of Parliament. The BUSHOP dissents. The MAN OF ARMES and the BURGES said they were two, and he but one, wherefore their voice should have most effect. Thereafter the King, in the play, ratified, approved, and confirmed all that was rehearsed."

The other nations of Europe, as well as England, had their Mysteries and Moralities. In France, Boileau, following Menestrier, imputes the introduction of these spectacles to travelling bands of pilgrims.

Chez nos devots ayeux, le théâtre abhorré
Fut long-temps dan la France un plaisir ignoré :
Des pelerins, dit-on, une troupe grossiere
En public à Paris y monta la premiere ;
Et sottement zélée, en sa simplicité
Jofia les saints, la Vierge, et Dieu par pieté.
L'Art Poétique, Chant iii.

In Spain the *Autos Sacramentales*, which are analogues to the Mys-

teries of the middle ages, are still presented without shocking a nation whose zeal is stronger than their taste ; and, it is believed, such rude and wild plays, founded on Scripture, are also occasionally acted in Flanders. In the *History of the Council of Constance*, we find that Mysteries were introduced into Germany by the English, about 1417, and were first performed to welcome the Emperor Sigismund, on his return from England ; and, from the choice of the subjects, we should almost suppose, that they had transferred to that country the *Chester Mysteries* themselves. "Les Anglois," says the historians, "se signalèrent entres les autres par un spectacle nouveau, ou au moins inusité jusques alors en Allemagne. Ce fut une comédie sacrée que les Evêques Anglois firent représenter devant l'Empereur, le Dimanche 13 de Janvier, sur la naissance du Sauveur, sur l'arrivée des mages, et sur la Massacre des Innocens." (*Hist. du Concile de Constance*, par L'Enfant, lib. v.) The character of these rude dramatic essays renders them rather subjects for the antiquary, than a part of a history of the regular dramatic art.

We may also pass over, with brief notice, the Latin plays which, upon the revival of letters, many of the learned composed, in express imitation of the ancient Grecian and Roman productions. We have mentioned those of Mussato, who was followed by the more celebrated Cararo, in the path which he had opened to fame. In other countries the same example was followed. These learned prolusions, however, were only addressed to persons of letters, then a very circumscribed circle, and, when acted at all, were presented at universities or courts on solemn public occasions. They form no step in the history of the Drama, unless that, by familiarising the learned with the form and rules of the ancient classical Drama, they gradually paved the way for the adoption of similar regulations into the revived vernacular Drama, and formed a division amongst the theatres of modern Europe, which has never yet been reconciled.

While the learned laboured to revive the Classical Drama in all its purity, the public at large, to which the treasures of the learned languages were as a fountain sealed, became addicted to a species of representation which properly neither fell under the denomination of comedy or tragedy, but was named History or Historical Drama. Charles Verardo, who, about 1492, composed a Drama of this sort, in Latin, upon the expulsion of the Moors from Granada, claims, for this production, a total emancipation from the rules of dramatic criticism.

Requirat autem nullus hic comedias
Leges ut observantur aut tragediæ ;
Agenda nempe est HISTORIA, non fabula.

"Let none expect that in this piece the rules of comedy or of tragedy should be observed ; we mean to act a history, not a fable." From

this expression it would seem, that, in a Historical Drama, the author did not think himself entitled to compress or alter the incidents as when the plot was fabulous, but was bound, to a certain extent, to conform to the actual course of events. In these histories, the poet often embraced the life and death of a monarch, or some other period of history, containing several years of actual time, which, nevertheless, were made to pass before the eyes of the audience during the two or three hours usually allotted for the action of a play. It is not to be supposed that, with so fair a field open before them, and the applause of the audience for their reward, the authors of these histories should long have confined themselves to the matter-of-fact contained in records. They speedily innovated or added to their dramatic chronicles, without regard to the real history. To those who plead for stage-plays, that they elucidate and explain many dark and obscure histories, and fix the facts firmly in the minds of the audience, of which they had otherwise but an imperfect apprehension, the stern Prynne replies with great scorn, "that play-poets do not explain, but sophisticate and deform good histories, with many false varnishes and playhouse fooleries;" and that "the histories are more accurately to be learned in the original authors who record them, than in derivate playhouse pamphlets, which corrupt them." Prynne's *Hist.-Mastix*, p. 940.

The dramatic chronicles, therefore, were a field in which the genius of the poet laboured to supply by character, sentiment, and incident, the meagre detail of the historian. They became so popular in England, that, during the short interval betwixt the revival of the stage and the appearance of Shakspeare, the most part of the English monarchs had lived and died upon the stage; and it is well known that almost all his historical plays were new written by him, upon the plan of old dramatic chronicles which already existed.

But the miscellaneous audience which crowded to the vernacular theatre, at its revival in Europe, were of that rank and intellect which is apt to become tired of a serious subject, and to demand that a lamentable tragedy should be intermingled with very pleasant mirth. The poets, obliged to cater for all tastes, seldom failed to insert the humours of some comic character, that the low or grotesque scenes in which he was engaged might serve as a relief to the graver passages of the Drama, and gratify the taste of those spectators who, like Christophero Sly, tired until the fool came on the stage again. Hence Sir Philip Sydney's censure on these dramatists, "how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings with clowns; not because the matter so carrieth it, but to thrust in the clown, by head and shoulders, to play a part in magestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion, so that neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel tragic-comedy attained." (*Defence of Poesie*, Sidney's *Arcadia*, edit. 1627, p. 563.) "If

we mark them well," he concludes, "funerals and hornpipes seldom match daintily together."

The historical plays led naturally into another class, which may be called Romantic Dramas, founded upon popular poems or fictitious narratives, as the former were on real history. Some of these were borrowed from foreign nations, ready dramatized to the hand of the borrower; others were founded on the plots which occurred in the almost innumerable novels and romances which we had made our own by translation. "I may boldly say it," says Gosson, a recreant playwright who attacked his former profession, "because I have seen it, that the *Palace of Pleasure*, the *Golden Asse*, the *Ethiopian History*, *Amadis of France*, the *Round Table*, *Bawdie Comedies in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish*, have been thoroughly ransacked to furnish the play-house in London." But it was not to be supposed that the authors would confine themselves to stricter rules in pieces founded upon Italian and Spanish novels, or upon romances of chivalry, than they had acted upon in the histories. Every circumstance which tended to loosen the reins of theatrical discipline, in the one case, existed in the other; and, accordingly, comedies of intrigue, and tragedies of action and show, everywhere superseded, at least in popular estimation, the severe and simple model of the Classical Drama.

It happened that in England and Spain, in particular, the species of composition which was most independent of critical regulation was supported by the most brilliant display of genius. Lopez de Vega and Calderon rushed on the stage with their hasty and high-coloured, but glowing productions, fresh from the mint of imagination, and scorning that the cold art of criticism should weigh them in her balance. The taste of the Spaniards has been proverbially inclined to the wild, the romantic, and the chivalrous; and the audience of their bards would not have parted with one striking scene, however inartificially introduced, to have gained for their favourites the praise of Aristotle and all his commentators. Lopez de Vega himself was not ignorant of critical rules; but he pleads the taste of his countrymen as an apology for neglecting those restrictions which he had observed in his earlier studies.

"Yet true it is I too have written plays,
The wiser few, who judge with skill might praise
But when I see how show and nonsense draws
The crowd's, and, more than all, the fair's applause;
Who still are forward with indulgent rage
To sanction every monster of the stage;
I, doomed to write the public taste to hit,
Resume the barbarous dress 'twas vain to quit;
I lock up every rule before I write,
Plautus and Terence banish from my sight,
Lest rage should teach these injured wits to join,
And their dumb books cry shame on works like mine.

To vulgar standards, then, I frame my play,
Writing at ease; for, since the public pay,
'Tis just, methinks, we by their compass steer,
And write the nonsense that they love to hear."

LORD HOLLAND'S *Life of Lope de Vega*, p. 103.

The Spanish comedies of intrigue also went astray, as far as their romantic tragedies, from the classical path. In fact, these new representations were infinitely more captivating from their vivacity, novelty, and, above all, from their reflecting the actual spirit of the time, and holding the mirror up to nature, than the cold imitations which the learned wrote in emulation of the Classic Drama. The one class are existing and living pictures of the times in which the authors lived; the others, the cold resurrection of the lifeless corpses which had long slumbered in the tomb of antiquity. The spirit of chivalry, which so long lingered in Spain, breathes through the wild and often extravagant genius of her poets. The hero is brave and loyal, and true to his mistress :

"A knight of love, who never broke a vow."

Lovers of this description, in whose mind the sexual passion is sublimated into high and romantic feeling, make a noble contrast with the coarse and licentious Greek or Roman, whose passion turns only on the difficulty of purchasing his mistress's person, but never conceives the slightest apprehension concerning the state of her affections.

That the crowd might have their loud laugh, a *grazioso*, or clown, usually a servant of the hero, is in the Spanish Drama, uniformly introduced to make sport. Like Kemp or Tarletun, famous in the clown's part before the time of Shakspeare, this personage was permitted to fill up his part with extemporary jesting, not only on the performers, but with the audience. This irregularity, with others, seems to have been borrowed by the English stage from that of Spain, and is the license which Hamlet condemns in his instructions to the players : "And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them ; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the meantime, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered ; that's villanous ; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

The bald simplicity of the ancient plots was, in like manner, contrasted to disadvantage with the intricacies, involutions, suspense, and bustle of Spanish intrigue upon the stage. Hence the boast of one of their poets, thus translated by Lord Holland :

"Invention, interest, sprightly turns in plays,
Say what they will, are Spain's peculiar praise;
Hers are the plots which strict attention seize,
Full of intrigue, and yet disclosed with ease.

Hence acts and scenes her fertile stage affords,
Unknown, unrivall'd, on the foreign boards."

Life of Lope de Vega, p. 106.

While we admire the richness of fancy displayed in the Spanish pieces, it is impossible, in an age of refinement, to avoid being shocked by their wilful and extravagant neglect of every thing which can add probability to the action of their Drama. But the apology for this license is well pleaded by Lord Holland.

"Without dwelling on the expulsion of the Chorus, (a most unnatural and inconvenient machine,) the moderns, by admitting a complication of plot, have introduced a greater variety of incidents and character. The province of invention is enlarged; new passions, or at least new forms of the same passions, are brought within the scope of dramatic poetry. French sources of interest are opened, and additional powers of imagination called into activity. Can we then deny what extends its jurisdiction, and enhances its interest, to be an improvement in an art whose professed object is to stir the passions by the imitation of human actions? In saying this, I do not mean to justify the breach of decorum, the neglect of probability, the anachronisms and other extravagances of the founders of the modern theatre. Because the first disciples of the school were not models of perfection, it does not follow that the fundamental maxims were defective. The rudeness of their workmanship is no proof of the inferiority of the material; nor does the want of skill deprive them of the merit of having discovered the mine. The faults objected to them form no necessary part of the system they introduced. Their followers in every country have either completely corrected or gradually reformed such abuses. Those who bow not implicitly to the authority of Aristotle, yet avoid such violent outrages as are common in our early plays. And those who pique themselves on the strict observance of his laws, betray in the conduct, the sentiments, the characters, and the dialogue of their pieces (especially of their comedies) more resemblance to the modern than the ancient theatre; their code may be Grecian, but their manners, in spite of themselves, are Spanish, English, or French. They may renounce their pedigree, and even change their dress, but they cannot divest their features of a certain family-likeness to their poetical progenitors."

In France the irregularities of the revived Drama were of a lower complexion; for, until her stage was refined by Corneille, and brought under its present strict *régime*, it was adorned by but little talent; a circumstance which, amongst others, may account for the ease with which she subjected herself to critical rules, and assumed the yoke of Aristotle. Until she submitted to the Grecian forms and restrictions, there is but little interesting in the history of her stage.

England adopted the historical and romantic Drama with ardour, and in a state scarce more limited by rules than that of Spain herself.

Her writers seem early to have ransacked Spanish literature ; for the union of the countries during the short reign of Mary, nay even their wars under Elizabeth and Philip, made them acquainted with each other. The Spaniards had the start in the revival of the Drama. *Ferrex and Porrex*, our earliest tragedy, was first presented in 1561 ; and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, our first comedy, in 1575 ; whereas Lopez de Vega (who was not by any means the earliest Spanish dramatist) died in 1562, leaving the stage stocked with his innumerable productions, to which his contemporaries had not failed to add their share. Thus, so soon as the stage of Britain was so far advanced as to be in a capacity of borrowing, that of Spain offered a fund to which her authors could have recourse ; and, in fact, the Spanish Drama continued to be a mine in which the British poets collected materials, often without acknowledgement, during all the earlier part of her dramatic history. From this source, as well as from the partialities of the audience, arose that early attempt at show and spectacle, at combats and marvellous incidents, which, though with very poor means of representation, our early dramatic poets loved to produce at the Bull or the Fortune playhouses. The extravagance of their plots, and the poor efforts by which our early dramatists endeavoured to represent show and procession, did not escape the censure of Sir Philip Sydney, who, leaning to the critical reformation which was already taking place in Italy, would gladly have seen our stage reduced to a more classical model.

"It is faultie," says that gallant knight, "both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporall actions. For the stage should alway present but one place ; and the uttermost time presupposed in it should bee, both by *Aristotle's* precept and common reason, but one day ; there are both many dayes and many places inartificially imagined. But if it be so in *Gorboduke*, how much more in all the rest ? where you shall have *Asia* of the one side, and *Africke* of the other, and so many other under kingdomes, that the plair when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where hee is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three ladies walke to gather flowers, and then wee must beleieve the stage to be a garden. By and by wee heare newes of shipwracke in the same place, then wee are to blame if we accept it not for a rocke. Upon the backe of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave ; while, in the meantime, two armies flie in, represented with some swordes and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field ? Now of time they are much more liberall ; for ordinarie it is, that two young princes fall in love. After many traverses shee is got with childe, delivered of a faire boy ; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is readie to get another childe, and all this in two houres space ; which how absurd

it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in *Italy* will not err in."

Italy, referred to by Sir Philip Sidney as the cradle of the reformed Drama, had had her own age of liberty and confusion; her mysteries, her moralities, her historical, and her romantic Dramas. But the taste for the ancient and classical stage was still rooted in the country where it had flourished, and Trissino is acknowledged as the father of the regular Drama. The *Sophonisba* of this learned prelate is praised by Voltaire as the first regular tragedy which Europe had seen after so many ages of barbarism. Pope has added his tribute.

"When learning, after the long Gothic night,
Fair o'er the western world renew'd its light,
With arts arising, Sophonisba rose,
The tragic muse returning wept her woes;
With her the Italian scene first learn'd to glow,
And the first tears for her were taught to flow."

This tragedy was represented at Rome in the year 1515. The Greek model is severely observed, and the author has encumbered his scene with a Chorus. It has some poetic beauties, and is well calculated to recommend the new or rather revived system on which it was written. *La Rosmonda* of Ruçelleri was written about the same time with *Sophonisba*; and, after these pieces, tragic-comedies, histories, and romantic Dramas, were discarded, and succeeded by tragedies upon a regular classical model; written in verse having five acts, and generally with a Chorus.

Notwithstanding their rigorous attention to the ancient model, the modern tragic poets of Italy have not been very successful in arresting the attention of their countrymen. They are praised rather than followed; and the stern and unbending composition of Alfieri, while it has given a tone of rude and stoical dignity to his Dramas, has failed in rendering them attractive. They frequently please in the closet; but the audience of modern days requires to be kept awake by something more active, more bustling, more deeply interesting, than the lessons of the schools; and a poet of high fancy has written in some measure in vain, because he has mistaken the spirit of his age. The tragic actors also, whatever excellence they may attain to in their art, do not attract the same consideration, attention, and respect, as in France or England; and they who are the direct authors of a pleasure so nearly connected with our noblest and best feelings, occupy a rank subordinate to the performers at the opera.

It is only as a modification of the Drama, that we here propose to touch upon that entertainment of Italian growth, but known by importation in every civilized kingdom of Europe. These kingdoms have often rivalled each other in the rewards held forth to musical perform-

ers, and encouraged their merit by a degree of profusion, which has had the effect of rendering the professors petulant, capricious, and unmanageable. Their high emoluments are not granted, or their caprices submitted to, without a degree of pleasure in some degree corresponding to the expense and the sufferance; and it is in vain for the admirers of the legitimate Drama to pretend that such is not obtained. Voltaire has with more justice confessed, that probably the best imitation of the ancient stage was to be found in the Italian tragic opera. The recitative resembled the musical declamation of the Athenians, and the choruses, which are frequently introduced, when properly combined with the subject, approach to those of the Greeks, as forming a contrast, by the airs which they execute, to the recitative, or modulated dialogue of the scene. Voltaire instances the tragic operas of Metastasio in particular, as approaching in beauty of diction, and truth of sentiment, near to the ancient simplicity; and finds an apology even for the detached airs, (so fatal to probability,) in the beauty of the poetry and the perfection of the music. And although, as a critic and man of cultivated taste, this author prefers the regular, noble, and severe beauties of the classic stage, to the effeminate and meretricious charms of the opera, still he concludes, that, with all its defects, the sort of enchantment which results from the brilliant intermixture of scenery, chorus, dancing, music, dress, and decoration, subjects even the genius of criticism; and that the most sublime tragedy, and most artful comedy, will not be so frequently revisited by the same individual as an indifferent opera. We may add the experience of London to the testimony of this great critic; and, indeed, were it possible that actors could frequently be procured, possessed of the powers of action and of voice, which were united in Grassini, it would be impossible to deny to the opera the praise of being an amusement as exquisite in point of taste, as fascinating from show and music. But as the musical parts of the entertainment are predominant, every thing else has been too often sacrificed to the caprice of a composer, wholly ignorant in every art save his own; and the mean and paltry dialogue, which is used as a vehicle for the music, is become proverbial to express nonsense and inanity.

The Italian comedy, as well as their tragedy, boasts its regular descent from classical times. Like the comedy of Menander, it introduces *dramatis personæ*, whose characters are never varied, and some of whom are supposed to be directly descended from the ancient *Mimi* of the *Atellanian* fables. Such an origin is claimed for the celebrated Harlequin, and for the no less renowned Puccinello, our English Punch, both of whom retain the character of jesters, cowards, wags, and buffoons, proper to the *Sannio* of the Romans. It is believed of these worthies, that they existed before the time of Plautus, and continued to play their frolics during the middle ages, when the legitim-

Drama was unknown. For the former fact, sculpture, as well as tradition, is appealed to by Italian antiquaries, who have discovered the representation of these grotesque characters upon the Etruscan vases. In support of the latter averment, the grave authority of Saint Thomas Aquinas is appealed to, who, we rejoice to find, thought Harlequin and Punch no unlawful company in fitting time and place. "*Ludus*," says that eminent person, with more consideration for human infirmity than some saints of our own day, "*est necessarius ad conversationem vite humanæ: ad omnia autem que sunt utilia conversationi humanæ deputari possunt aliqua officia licita: et ideo etiam officium histrionum quod ordinatur ad solatium hominibus exhibendum, non est secundum se illicitum, nec sunt histriones in statu peccati, dummodo moderate ludo utantur; id est, non utendo aliquibus illicitis verbis vel factis, ad ludum, et non adhibendo ludum negotiis et temporibus indebitis unde illi qui moderate eis subveniunt, non peccant, sed juste faciunt mercem ministerii eorum eis tribuendo. Et licet D. August. super. Joan. dicit quod donare res suas histrionibus vitium est immane, hoc intelligi debet de illis qui dant histrionibus qui in ludo utuntur illicitis, vel de illis qui superflue sua in tales consumunt, non de illis histrionibus qui moderate ludo utuntur.*"

Saint Anthony gives his sanction to Saint Thomas on this point: "*Histrionalis ars, quia deservit humana recreationi, quæ necessaria est vite hominis secundum D. Thomam, de ea non est illicita, et de illa arte vivere non est prohibitum.*" (S. Antonius in 3 part. sue *Summæ*, tit. iii. cap. 4.) Saint Anthony, indeed, adds the reasonable restriction that no clergyman should play Harlequin, and that Punch should not exhibit in the church.

Under this venerable authority, these Mimi went on and flourished. Other characters enlarged their little Drama. The personages appeared in masks. "Each of these," says Mr. Walker, "was originally intended as a kind of characteristic representation of some particular Italian district or town. Thus *Pantalone* was a Venetian merchant; *Dottore*, a Bolognese physician; *Spaviento*, a Neapolitan braggadocio; *Pullicinella*, a wag of Apulia; *Gianguergolo* and *Coviello*, two clowns of Calabria; *Gelsomino*, a Roman beau; *Beltrame*, a Milanese simpleton; *Brighella*, a Ferrarese pimp; and *Arlecchino*, a blundering servant of Bergamo. Each of these personages was clad in a peculiar dress; each had his peculiar mask; and each spoke the dialect of the place he represented. Besides these, and a few other such personages, of which at least four were introduced in each play, there were the *Amorosos* or *Innamoratos*; that is, some men and women who acted serious parts, with *Smeraldina*, *Colombina*, *Spilletta*, and other females, who played the parts of servettas or waiting-maids. All these spoke Tuscan or Roman, and wore no masks." (*Essay on the Revival of the Drama in Italy*, p. 249.)

The pieces acted by this class of actors were called *Commedia dell' arte*, and were congenial to the taste of the Italians, with whom gesticulation and buffoonery are natural attributes. Their Drama was of the most simple kind. Each of the actors was already possessed of his dramatic character, which was as inalienable as his dress, was master of the dialect he was to use, and had his imagination and memory stored with all the characteristic jests, or *lazzi* as they were termed, peculiar to the personage he represented. All that the author had to do was to invent the skeleton of a plot, which should bring his characters into dramatic situation with respect to each other. The dialogue suited to the occasion was invented by the players, just as ours invest their parts with the proper gestures and actions. This skeleton had the name of *scenario*, and the precise action as well as the dialogue was filled up by the performers, either impromptu, or in consequence of previous arrangement and premeditation. This species of comedy was extremely popular, especially among the lower class of spectators. It was often adopted as an amusement in good society, and by men of genius; and Flamineo de la Scala has left about fifty such *scenarios* adapted for representation. The fashion even found its way into England, and probably the part of Master Punch, who first appeared in the character of the *Vice* of the English morality, was trusted to the improvisatory talents of the actor. Mr. D'Israeli, a curious as well as elegant investigator of ancient literature, has shown, that at least one scheme of a *Commedia dell' arte* has been preserved to us. It is published in the *Variorum* edition of Shakespeare, but remains unexplained by the commentators. Such comedies, it is evident, could require no higher merit in the composer than the imagining and sketching a few comic situations; the dialogue and diction was all intrusted to the players.

The Italians, however, became early possessed of a regular comedy, which engrossed the admiration of the more cultivated classes of society. Bibbiena's comedy, entitled *La Calandra*, is composed in imitation of the Dramas of Terence and Plautus. It was first acted in 1490. *La Calandra* is remarkable not only for being the first Italian comedy, but also for the perfection of scenic decoration with which it was accompanied in the representation. It was followed by the productions of Ariosto and Trissino, and other authors in the same line. But it appears from the efforts used to support this style of Drama, that it did not take kindly root in the soil, and lacked that popularity which alone can nurse it freely. Various societies were formed under the whimsical titles of *Gli Intronati*, *Gli Insensati*, and so forth, for the express purpose of bringing forward the regular Drama; exertions which would certainly have been unnecessary, had it received that support and encouragement which arises from general popularity.

Goldoni, in a later age, at once indulged his own fanciful genius and

his natural indolence, by renouncing the classical rules, and endeavouring to throw into the old and native Italian *Mascherata* the variety and attributes of the proper comedy. He adopted Harlequin and the rest of his merry troop in the characters which they held, and endeavoured to enlist them in the more regular service of the Drama; just as free corps and partisans are sometimes new-modelled into battalions of the line. This ingenious and lively writer retained all the license of the *Commedia dell' arte*, and all the immunities which it claimed from regular and classical rules; but instead of trusting to the extempore jests and grotesque wit of the persons whom he introduced, he engaged them in dialogues, as well as plots, of his own invention, which often display much humour and even pathos. It required, however, the richness of a fancy like Goldoni's to extract novelty and interest from a dramatic system in which so many of the actors held a fixed and prescriptive character, hardly admitting of being varied. Accordingly, we do not find that the Italian stage is at present in a more flourishing condition than that of other modern nations.

The revival of the regular Drama in France was attended with important consequences, owing to the nature of her government, the general use of her language throughout Europe, and the influence which, from her situation, she must necessarily hold over other nations. It is the boast of Paris that the regular classical Drama, banished from every other stage, found a safe and honourable refuge on her own. Yet France has reluctantly confessed that she also had her hour of barbarism. Her earlier Drama was borrowed, like that of other countries, from Spain, who, during the whole of the sixteenth and great part of the seventeenth century, held such a formidable predominance in the European republic. While the classical stage was reviving in Italy, and the historical and romantic Drama was flourishing in Spain, France was torn to pieces by civil discord. The first French tragedy composed upon a regular plan was that of *Mairet*, imitated from the *Sophonisba* of Trissino; and Riccoboni boasts with justice, that whoever shall compare the Italian tragedy of the sixteenth century with that of the French of the same period, will find the latter extravagant and irregular, and the former already possessed of gravity, dignity, and regularity. The French, like the English, date the excellence of their stage from one great author; and the illustrious name of Pierre Corneille affords to their dramatic history the mighty landmark which Shakspeare gives to our own.

Cardinal Richelieu, who had succeeded in establishing upon a broad basis the absolute power of the French monarch, was not insensible to the graces and ornaments which the throne derived from being surrounded by the Muses. He was himself fond of poetry, and even a competitor for the honours of the buskin. He placed himself at the

head of five dramatic writers, to whom, on that account, the public gave the title of *Les Cinq Auteurs*. All these are deservedly forgotten excepting Corneille, of whose successful talent the cardinal had the meanness to evince no ordinary degree of jealousy. The malevolence of the minister was carried so far, that he employed the French Academy, whose complaisance must be recorded to their shame, to criticize severely the *Cid*, the first, and perhaps the finest of Corneille's tragedies. Scuderie, a favourite of the Cardinal, buoyed by Richelieu's favour, was able for some time to balance Corneille in the opinion of the public ; but his name is now scarcely known by any other circumstance than his imprudent and audacious rivalry. This great man was not only surrounded by the worst possible models, but unfortunately the authors of these models were also favourites of the public, and of the all-powerful Cardinal ; yet Corneille vanquished the taste of his age, the competition of his rivals, and the envy of Richelieu.

Corneille, like his predecessors, and like Routrou in particular, borrowed liberally from the Spanish theatre ; but his own taste, regulated probably upon his situation, dictated an adherence to the classical model. The French stage arose, it must be remembered, under the protection of an absolute monarch, for whose amusement the poet laboured, and in whose presence the Drama was performed. It followed as a natural consequence, that a more strict etiquette was exacted upon the scene than had hitherto been supposed applicable to a merely popular amusement. A departure from regularity in tragedy was no longer a bold flight. A violation of decorum in comedy was no longer a broad jest. When the audience was dignified by the presence of the monarch, the former became an impertinence, and the latter a gross and indecent insult. The muse of comedy was therefore bound over for her good behaviour ; and even her grave sister was laid under such rules and restrictions as should ensure the decorum and dignity of her scene.

It was at this period that those classical fetters which are framed on the three unities were fashioned into form, and imposed on the French Drama. These are acknowledged by Corneille, in his *Essay upon Dramatic Poetry*, in the following short but emphatic sentence :—" *Il faut observer les unités d'action, de lieu, et de jour : personne n'en doute.*" The rule, as thus emphatically admitted by the fiery Corneille, was equally binding upon the elegant Racine, and has fettered the French stage until the present day. "La Motte," says Voltaire, "a man of wit and talent, but attached to paradoxes, has written in our time against the doctrine of the Unities, but that literary heresy had no success."

Upon these rules, adopted by the very first writer of eminence for the French stage, and subscribed to by all succeeding dramatists, depends the principal and long-disputed difference betwixt the Drama of

France, and those countries in which her laws of taste had been received; and the stages of Spain, England, and modern Germany, where those critical maxims have been controverted. In other words, the unities proper to the Classical Drama have been found inapplicable to plays of a historical or romantic plan. It is, therefore, necessary to examine with accuracy the essence and effect of those laws so often disputed with more obstinacy than liberality.

The arbitrary forms to which the French thus subjected their theatre are, in their general purport, founded on good and sound rules of the critical art. But, considered literally, the interpretation put upon those unities by the French critics must necessarily lay the dramatic author under restraints equally severe and unnecessary, without affording any corresponding addition to the value of his work. The pedantry by which they are enforced, reminds one of the extreme, minute, rigorous, and punctilious discipline, to which some regiments have been subjected by a pedantic commanding officer, which seldom fails to lower the spirit, and destroy the temper of the soldier, without being of the slightest service to him in the moment of danger or the day of battle.

The first dramatic unity is that of Action; and, rightly understood, it is by far the most important. A whole, says Aristotle, is that which has a beginning, middle, and end. In short, one strong concentrated interest, upon which all subordinate incidents depend, and to which they contribute, must pervade the piece. It must open with the commencement of the play, evolve itself, and be progressive with its progress,—must be perpetually in sight and never stationary, until at length it arrives at a catastrophe, by which it is ended and extinguished. In this rule, abstractedly considered, there is nothing but what is consistent with good sense and sound criticism. The period allowed for dramatic representation is not long, and will not admit of the episodal ornaments which may be happily introduced into epic poetry. And as the restlessness or impatience of a theatrical audience is always one of its marked characteristics, it has been observed, that neither the most animated description, nor the most beautiful poetry, can ever reconcile the spectators to those inartificial scenes in which the plot or action of the piece stands still, that the performers may say fine things. The introduction of an interest, separate and distinct from the main action of the play, has a still worse effect; it diminishes the effect of the whole, and divides the attention of the audience; as a pack of hounds, when in full pursuit, are impeded and puzzled by starting a fresh object of chase.

Yet even this rule must be liberally considered, if we would allow dramatic authors that fair room and exercise for their genius, which gives rise to the noblest display of genius in the art. Modern dramatists are no longer, it must be remembered, limited to the simple and surer uniformity of the ancient Drama, which fixed on one single

event as its object,—made it the subject of the moral reflections of the Chorus,—managed it by the intervention of three, or at most five persons, and consequently presented a picture so limited in size and subject, that there was no difficulty in avoiding the intermixture of a foreign interest. The modern taste has opened the stage to a wider range of topics, which are, at the same time, more complicated in detail, depending on the agency of a variety of performers, and on the result of a succession of events. Such Dramas have indeed a unity of action peculiar to themselves, which should predominate over and absorb every other. But although, like the oak, it should predominate over all the neighbouring underwood, its dignity is not injured by the presence and vicinity of that which it overshadows. On the contrary, a succession of events tending to the same end, if they do not divert the attention from the principal interest, cannot fail, by their variety and succession, to keep it fixed upon the business of the scene.

To take an example. In the tragedy of *Macbeth*, a chain of varied and important events is introduced, any one link of which might be hammered out into a Drama, on the severe and simple model of the Drama of ancient Greece. There is the murder of Duncan,—that of Banquo,—and the dethronement and death of the tyrant; all which are events complete of themselves, independent of each other, and yet included within one tragedy of five acts. But, nevertheless, this is never felt as a deficiency in the performance. It is to the character of Macbeth, to his ambition, guilt, remorse, and final punishment, that the mind attaches itself during the whole play; and thus the succession of various incidents, unconnected excepting by the relation they bear to the principal personage, far from distracting the attention of the audience, continues to sharpen and irritate curiosity till the curtain drops over the fallen tyrant. This is not, indeed, a unity of action according to the rule of Aristotle, or the observance of the French theatre; but, in a higher point of view, it has all the advantage which could possibly be derived from the severest adherence to the precept of Aristotle, with this additional merit, that the interest never stagnates in declamation, or is suspended by unnecessary dialogue.

It would in fact be easy to show, that the unity of action, in its strict sense, may frequently be an unnatural as well as a cumbrous restraint on the genius of the poet. In the course of nature, an insulated action seldom exists, of a nature proper to transfer to the stage. If, indeed, the play is founded on some single mythological fable, or if the scene is laid in some early stage of society, when man as yet remained separated from his kind, and connected only with his petty tribe or family, the subject of a plot may be chosen where the agency of a very few persons, and these naturally connected together, may, without foreign or extraneous assistance, afford matter for a tragedy. But, in the actual course of the peopled world, men are so crowded together, and

their movements depend so much upon impulses foreign to themselves, that the action must often appear multiplied and complicated, and all that the author can do is, to preserve the interest uniform and undivided. Its progress may be likened to that of a brook through beautiful scenery. A judicious improver of the landscape would be certainly desirous to make its course visible, but not to cut off its beautiful undulations, or to compel it into a straight channel. He would follow the course of nature, and neither affect to conceal the smaller rills by which the stream was fed, nor bring them so much in view as to deprive the principal object of its consequence. We admit the difficulty inseparable from the dramatic art, and must grant, that the author runs some risk of losing sight of the main interest of the piece, by dwelling upon the subordinate accessories; but we contend, that the attention of the audience is still more likely to be fatigued by a bald and simple plot, to which, during the course of five acts, there must belong much speaking and little progress. And, in point of common sense and common feeling, that piece must always present unity of action which has unity of interest and feeling; which fixes the mind of the audience upon one train of thought and passion, to which every occurrence in the Drama verges; and which is consummated and wound up by the final catastrophe.

The second dramatic unity is that of Time, about which the critics of various nations have disagreed. If taken in its strict and proper sense, it means that the time occupied by the representation, should not exceed that supposed to be consumed in the action represented. But even Aristotle extends the duration of the action to one revolution of the sun, and Corneille extends it to thirty hours, which is, to the actual period of representation, as ten to one. Boileau, a supereminent authority, thus lays down the rule for the unities of time and place:—

“ Que le lieu de la scène y soit fixé et marqué.
Un Rimeur, sans peril, delà les Pirenées,
Sur la scène en un jour renferme des années;
Là souvent le Héros d'un spectacle grossier,
Enfant au premier acte, est barbon au dernier;
Mais nous, que la Raison à ses règles engage,
Nous voulons qu'avec art l'action se ménage;
Qu'en un lieu, qu'en jour, un seul fait accompli,
Tienne jusqu'à la fin le Théâtre rempli.”

It has been triumphantly remarked, that in thus yielding up the strict letter of the precept—in allowing the three hours employed in acting a play to be multiplied into twenty-four or thirty—the critics have retained nearly all the inconvenience of this famous rule, while they sacrificed its principle, and any advantage attached to its observance. The only benefit supposed to be attached to this unity is that of probability. We shall not at present inquire whether this is worth preserving, at the cost of imposing heavy restrictions on dramatic

genius. But granting the affirmative, probability is as much violated by squeezing the events of the next twenty-four hours into a period of only three, as if the author had exercised the still greater license of the English and Spanish theatres. There is no charm in the revolution of the sun, which circumscribes within that particular period the events of a Drama. When the magic circle drawn around the author by the actual date of representation is once obliterated, the argument grounded upon probability falls ; and he may extend his narrative unconfined by any rule, except what may be considered as resolving itself into the unity of action. A week, a month, a year, years—may be included in the course of the Drama, provided always the poet has power so to rivet the attention of the audience on the passing scene, that the lapse of time shall pass unregarded. There must be none of those marked pauses which force upon the spectator's attention the breach of this unity. Still less ought the judicious dramatist to permit his piece to embrace such a space of time, as shall necessarily produce the change on the persons of the characters ridiculed by Boileau. The extravagant conduct of the plot in the *Winter's Tale* has gone far to depreciate that Drama, which, in passages of detached beauty, is inferior to none of Shakspeare's in the opinion of the best judges. It might perhaps be improved in acting, by performing the three first acts as a play, and the fourth and fifth as an after piece. Yet, even as it is now acted, who is it that, notwithstanding the cold objection arising out of the breach of unity, witnesses, without delight, the exquisite contrast betwixt the court and the hamlet, the fascinating and simple elegance of Perdita, or the witty rogueries of Autolycus? The poet is too powerful for the critic, and we lose the exercise of our judgment in the warmth of our admiration.

The faults of Shakspeare, or of his age, we do not, however, recommend to the modern dramatist, whose modesty will certainly place him in his own estimation far beneath that powerful magician, whose art could fascinate us even by means of deformity itself. But if, for his own sake, the author ought to avoid such gross violations of dramatic rule, the public, for theirs, ought not to tie him down to such severe limitations as must cramp, at least, if they do not destroy, his power of affording them pleasure. If the whole five acts are to be compressed within the space of twenty-four hours, the events must, in the general case, be either so much crowded upon each other as to destroy the very probability which it is the purpose of this law to preserve ; or, many of them, being supposed to have happened before the commencement of the piece, must be detailed in narrative, which never fails to have a bad effect on the stage.

The same objections apply to the rigid enforcement of the third unity, that of Place ; and, indeed, the French authors have used respecting it the license of relaxing, in practice, the severity of their

theory. They have frequently infringed the rule which they affirm to be inviolable ; and their flexible creed permits the place to be changed, provided the audience are not transported out of the city where the scene is laid. This mitigation of doctrine, like that granted in the unity of time, is a virtual resignation of the principle contended for. Let us examine, however, upon what that principle is founded.

The rule which prohibits the shifting the scene during the period of performance was borrowed by the French from the ancients, without considering the peculiar circumstances in which it arose. First, We have seen already that, during the ancient Drama, there was no division into acts, and that the action was only suspended during the songs of the Chorus, who themselves represented a certain class of personages connected with the scene. The stage, therefore, was always filled ; and a supposed change of place would have implied the violent improbability, that the whole Chorus were transported, while in the sight of the spectators, and employed in the discharge of their parts, to the new scene of action. Secondly, There is evidence that in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, and the *Ajax* of Sophocles, the scene is actually changed, in defiance of the presence of the Chorus ; and a much greater violation of probability is incurred than could have taken place in a modern theatre, where, before every change of scene, the stage is emptied of the performers. Thirdly, The ancients were less hardly pressed by this rule than the modern writers. From the dimensions of their theatres, and the size of their stages, the place of action was considerably larger, and might be held to include a wider extent than ours. The climate of Greece admitted of many things being transacted with propriety in the open air ; and, finally, they had a contrivance for displaying the interior of a house or temple to the audience, which, if it was not an actual change of scene, was adapted to the same purpose.

If this long-litigated question, therefore, is to be disposed of by precedent, we have shown that the rule of the ancients was neither absolute, nor did the circumstances of their stage correspond with those of ours ; to which it may be added, that the simple and inartificial structure of their plots seldom required a change of scene. But, surely, it is of less consequence to examine the practice of the ancients, than to consider how far it is founded upon truth, good taste, and general effect. Granting, therefore, that the supposed illusion, which transports the spectator to the actual scene of action, really exists, let us inquire whether, in sacrificing the privilege of an occasional change of scene, we do not run the risk of shocking the spectator, and disturbing his delightful dreams, by other absurdities and improbabilities, attendant necessarily on a scrupulous adherence to this restriction.

If the action is always to pass in the scene, some place of general resort must be adopted, a hall, ante-room, or the like. It can seldom

be so fortunately selected but that much must be necessarily discussed there, which, in order to preserve any appearance of probability, should be transacted elsewhere ; that many persons must be introduced whose presence in that particular place must appear unnatural ; and that much must be done there, which the very circumstances of the piece render totally absurd. Dennis has applied these observations with great force, and at the same time with great bitterness, in his critique upon *Cato*, which Johnson has quoted at length in his *Life of Addison*. The scene, it must be remembered, is laid, during the whole Drama, with scrupulous attention to the classical rule, in the great hall of Cato's palace at Utica. Here the conspirators lay their plots, the lovers carry on their intrigues ; and yet Sempronius, with great inconsistency, disguises himself as Juba, to obtain entrance into this vestibule, which was common to all. Here Cato retires to moralize, and chides his son for interrupting him, and, although he retires to stab himself, it is to this place that he is brought back to die. All this affords a striking proof how genius and taste can be fettered and embarrassed by a too pedantic observance of rules. Let no one suppose that the inconveniences arising from the rigid observance of the unity of place, occur in the tragedy of *Cato* alone ; they might, in that case, be attributed to the inexperience or want of skill in the author. The tragedies of Corneille and Racine afford examples enough that the authors found themselves compelled to violate the rules of probability and common sense, in order to adhere to those of Aristotle. In the tragedy of *Cinna*, for example, the scene is laid in the Emperor's cabinet ; and, in that very cabinet, compelled, doubtless, by the laws of unity, Amelia shouts forth aloud her resolution to assassinate the Emperor. It is there, too, that Maximus and Cinna confide to each other all the secrets of their conspiracy ; and it is there where, to render the impropriety more glaring, Cinna suddenly reflects upon the rashness of his own conduct :—

"Amis, dans ce palais on peut nous écouter ;
Et nous parlons peut-être avec trop d'imprudence,
Dans un lieu si mal propre à notre confidence."

It would be an invidious, but no difficult task, to show that several of the *chefs-d'œuvres* of the French Drama are liable to similar objections ; and that the awkward dilemmas in which the unity of place involves them, are far more likely to destroy the illusion of the performance than the mere change of scene would have done. But we refer the reader to the *Dramaturgie* of Lessing upon this curious topic.

The main question yet remains behind, namely, whether such an illusion is actually produced in the minds of the audience by the best acted play, as induces them to suppose themselves witnessing a reality ; —an illusion, in short, so complete as to suffer interruption from the occasional extension of time, or change of place, in the course of the

piece? We do not hesitate to say that no such impression was ever produced on a sane understanding; and that the Parisian critic, in whose presence the unities are never violated, no more mistakes Talma for Nero, than a London citizen identifies Kemble with Coriolanus, or Kean with Richard III. The ancients, from the distance of the stage, and their mode of dressing and disguising their characters, might certainly approach a step nearer to reality; and, producing on their stage the very images of the deities they worshipped, speaking the language which they accounted proper to them, it is probable that, to minds capable of high excitation, there might be a shade of this illusion in their representations. The solemn distance of the stage, the continuous and uninterrupted action, kept the attention of the Greeks at once more closely riveted, and more abstracted from surrounding circumstances. But, in the modern theatre, the rapid succession of intervals for reflection; the well-known features of the actors; the language which they speak, differing frequently from that which belongs to the age and country where the scene is laid—interrupt, at every turn, every approximation to the fantastic vision of reality into which those writers who insist upon the strict observance of the unities, suppose the audience to be lulled. To use the nervous words of Johnson, "It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatic fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited." There is a conventional treaty between the author and the audience, that, upon certain suppositions being granted by the latter, his powers of imagination shall be exerted for the amusement of the spectators. The postulates which are demanded, even upon the French theatre, and under the strictest model, are of no ordinary magnitude. Although the stage is lighted with lamps, the spectator must say with the subjugated Catherine,

"I grant it is the sun that shines so bright."

The painted canvass must pass for a landscape; the well-known faces of the performers for those of ancient Greeks, or Romans, or Saracens, and the present time for many ages distant. He that submits to such a convention ought not scrupulously to limit his own enjoyment. That which is supposed Rome in one act, may, in the next, be fancied Paris; and as for time, it is, to use the words of Dr. Johnson, "of all modes of existence, most obsequious to imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and, therefore, willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation."

If dramatic representation does not produce the impression of reality, in what, may it be asked, consists its power? We reply, that its effects are produced by the powerful emotions which it excites in the minds of the spectators. The professors of every fine art operate their im-

pressions in the same manner, though they address themselves to different organs. The painter exhibits his scene to the eye ; the orator pours his thunder upon the ear ; the poet awakens the imagination of his reader by written description ; but each has the same motive, the hope, namely, of exciting in the reader, hearer, or spectator, a tone of feeling similar to that which existed in his own bosom, ere it was bodied forth by his pencil, tongue, or pen. It is the artist's object, in short, to tune the reader's imagination to the same pitch with his own ; and to communicate, as well as colours and words can do, the same sublime sensations which had dictated his own compositions. The tragedian attempts to attain this object still more forcibly, because his art combines those of the poet, orator, and artist, by storming, as it were, the imagination at once through the eye and the ear. Undoubtedly, a Drama with such advantages, and with those of dresses and costume, approaches more nearly to actual reality ; and, therefore, has a better chance of attaining its object, especially when addressing the sluggish and inert fancies of the multitude ; although it may remain a doubtful question whether, with all these means and appliances, minds of a high poetic temperature may not receive a more lively impression from the solitary perusal, than from the representation, of one of Shakspeare's plays. But, to the most ignorant spectator, however unaccustomed to the trick of the scene, the excitement which his fancy receives, falls materially short of actual mental delusion. Even the sapient Partridge himself never thought of being startled at the apparition of the King of Denmark, which he knew to be only a man in a strange dress ; it was the terror so admirably expressed by Garrick, which communicated itself to his feelings, and made him reverse the case of the fiends, and tremble without believing. In truth, the effects produced upon this imaginary character, as described by an excellent judge of human nature, exhibit, probably, the highest point of illusion to which theatrical exhibition can conduct a rational being. In an agony of terror which made his knees knock against each other, he never forgets that he is only witnessing a play. The presence of Mrs. Millar and his master assures him against the reality of the apparition, yet he is no more able to subdue his terrors by this comfortable reflection, than we have been to check our tears, although well aware that the Belvidera, with whose sorrows we sympathized, was no other than our own inimitable Mrs. Siddons. With all our passions, and all our sympathies, we are still conscious of the ideal character of that which excites them ; and it is probably this very consciousness of the unreality of the scene, that refines our sorrows into a melancholy, yet delicious emotion, and extracts from it that bitterness necessarily connected with a display of similar misery in actual life.

If, therefore, no illusion subsists of a character to be affected by a change of scene, or by the prolongation of the time beyond the rules of

Aristotle, the very foundation of these unities is undermined; but, at the same time, every judicious author will use liberty with prudence.

If we are inclined to ascend to the origin of these celebrated rules, we ought not to be satisfied with the *ipse dixit* of a Grecian critic, who wrote so many centuries ago, and whose works have reference to a state of dramatic composition which has now no existence. Upon the revival of letters, indeed, the authority of Aristotle was considered as omnipotent; but even Boileau remonstrated against his authority when weighed with reason and common sense.

"Un pedant enivré de sa vaine science,
Tout hérissé de Grec, tout bouffu d'arrogance,
Et qui de mille auteurs retenus mot pour mot,
Dans la teste entassés, n'a souvent fait qu'un sot,
Croit qu'un livre fait tout, et que sans Aristote,
La raison ne voit goutte, et le bon sens radote."

The opinions of Aristotle must be judged of according to the opportunities and authorities which lay open before him; and from the high critical judgment he has displayed, we can scarce err in supposing he would have drawn different results, in different circumstances. Dr. Drake, whose industry and taste have concentrated so much curious information respecting Shakspeare and his age, has quoted upon this topic a striking passage from Mr. Morgan's *Essay on the Character of Falstaff*.

Speaking, says Dr. Drake, of the magic influence which our poet almost invariably exerts over his auditors, Mr. Morgan remarks that

"On such an occasion, a fellow like *Rymer*,* waking from his trance, shall lift up his constable's staff, and charge this great magician, this daring *practiser of arts inhibited*, in the name of Aristotle, to surrender; whilst Aristotle himself, disowning his wretched officer, would fall prostrate at his feet and acknowledge his supremacy.—O supreme of dramatic excellence! (might he say,) not to me be imputed the insolence of fools. The bards of *Greece* were confined within the narrow circle of the Chorus, and hence they found themselves constrained to practise, for the most part, the precision, and copy the details of nature. I followed them, and knew not that a larger circle might be drawn, and the Drama extended to the whole reach of human genius. Convinced, I see that a more compendious *nature* may be obtained: a nature of *effects* only, to which neither the relation of place, or continuity of time, are always essential. Nature, condescending to the faculties and apprehensions of man, has drawn through human life a regular chain of visible causes and effects: But Poetry delights in surprise, conceals her steps, seizes at once upon the heart, and obtains the sublime of things without betraying the rounds of her ascent. True poetry is *magic* not *nature*; an effect from causes hidden or unknown. To the

* *Rymer* was a calumniator of Shakspeare.

magician I prescribed no laws ; his law and his power are one ; his power is his law. If his end is obtained, who shall question his course ? Means, whether apparent or hidden, are justified in poesy by success ; but then most perfect and most admirable when most concealed.

" Yes," continues Mr. Morgan, " whatever may be the neglect of some, or the censure of others, there are those who firmly believe, that this wild, this uncultivated *barbarian*, as he has been called, has not yet obtained one half of his fame ; and who trust that some new Stagyrite will arise, who, instead of pecking at the surface of things, will enter into the inward soul of his compositions, and expel, by the force of congenial feelings, those foreign impurities which have stained and disgraced his page. And as to those *spots* which still remain, they may perhaps become invisible, to those who shall seek them through the medium of his beauties, instead of looking for those beauties, as is too frequently done, through the smoke of some real or imputed obscurity. When the hand of time shall have brushed off his present editors and commentators, and when the very name of Voltaire, and even the memory of the language in which he has written, shall be no more, the Apalachian mountains, the banks of the Ohio, and the plains of Sciola, shall resound with the accents of this *barbarian*. In his native tongue he shall roll the genuine passions of nature ; nor shall the griefs of *Lear* be alleviated, or the charms and wit of *Rosalind* be abated by time." *

In adopting the views of those authors who have pleaded for the liberty of the poet, it is not our intention to deny, that great advantages may be obtained by the observance of the unities ; not considering them as in themselves essential to the play, but only as points upon which the credibility and intelligibility of the action in some sort depends. We acknowledge, for example, that the author would be deficient in dramatic art, who should divide the interest of his piece into two or more separate plots, instead of combining it in one progressive action. We confess, moreover, that the writer, who more violently extends the time, or more frequently changes the place of representation, than can be justified by the necessity of the story, and vindicated by his exertion of dramatic force, acts unwisely, in so far as he is likely to embarrass a great part of the audience, who, from imperfect hearing or slowness of comprehension, may find it difficult to apprehend the plot of his play. The latitude which we are disposed to grant, is regulated by the circumstances of the case, the interest of the plot, and, above all, the talents of the author. He that despises the praise of regularity which is attainable by study, cannot reckon on the indulgence of the audience, unless on the condition of indemnifying them by force of genius. If a definitive rule were to be adopted, we should say, that it would certainly be judicious to place any change of place or extension of time

* *Shakspeare and his Times*, by Nathan Drake, M.D., pp. 553, 554, vol. ii.

at the beginning of a new act ; as the falling of the curtain and cessation of the action have prepared the audience to set off, as it were, upon a new score. But we consider the whole of these points of propriety as secondary to the real purposes of the Drama, and not as liminary of that gifted genius, who can, in the whirlwind of his scene, bear the imagination of his audience along with him over the boundaries of place,

“While panting Time toils after him in vain.”

But it is not upon the observance of the unities alone that the French found their pretensions to a classical theatre. They boast also to have discarded that intermixture of tragic and comic scenes, which was anciently universal upon the Spanish and English stages.

If it had been only understood by this reformation, that the French condemned and renounced that species of tragi-comedy, which comprehended two distinct plots, the one of a serious, the other of a humorous character, and these two totally unconnected, we give them full credit for their restriction. Dryden, in the *Spanish Friar*, and other pieces ; and Southern, both in *Oronooko* and *Isabella*, as well as many other authors of their age, have in this particular transgressed unpardonably the unity of action. For, in the cases we have quoted, the combination of the two plots is so slight, that the serious and comic scenes, separated, might each furnish forth a separate Drama ; so that the audience appear to be listening not to one play only, but to two dramatic actions independent of each other, although contained in the same piece. So far, therefore, we heartily agree in the rule which excludes such an unhappy interchange of inconsistent scenes, moving upon opposite principles and interests.

When, however, the French critics carry this rule farther, and prescribe the appearance of comic or inferior characters, however intimately connected with the tragic plot, we would observe, in the first place, that they run the risk of diminishing the reality of the scene ; and secondly, that they exclude a class of circumstances which are essential to its beauty.

On the first point it must be observed, that the rule which imposes upon valets and subordinate personages the necessity of talking as harmonious verse and as elegant poetry as their masters, entirely ruins the probability of the action. Where all is elegant, nothing can be sublime ; where all is ornamented, nothing can be impressive ; where all is tuned to the same smooth *falseto* of sentiment, nothing can be natural or real. By such an assimilation of manners and language, we stamp fiction on the very front of our dramatic representation. The touches of nature which Shakspeare has exhibited in his lower and gayer characters, like the chastened background of a landscape, increase the effect of the principal group. The light and fanciful humour of Mercutio, serves, for example, to enhance and illustrate the

romantic and passionate character of Romeo. Even the doating fondness and silly peevishness of the Nurse tend to relieve the soft and affectionate character of Juliet, and to place her before the audience in a point of view, which those who have seen Miss O'Neil perform Juliet, know how to appreciate. A contrast is effected, which a French author dared not attempt ; but of which every bosom at once acknowledges the power and the truth. Let us suppose, that the gay and gallant Mercutio had as little character as the walking confidant of a French hero, who echoes the hexameters of his friend in hexameters of a lower level ; or let us suppose the nurse of Juliet to be a gentle Nora, as sublime in white linen as her principal in white satin ; and let the reader judge whether the piece would gain in dignity or decorum, any thing proportioned to what it must lose in truth and interest. The audience at once sympathizes with the friendship of Romeo and Mercutio, rendered more natural and more interesting by the very contrast of their characters ; and each spectator feels as a passion, not as a matter of reflection, that desire of vengeance which impels Romeo against Tibalt ; for we acknowledge as an amiable and interesting individual, the friend whom he has lost by the sword of the Capulet. Even the anilities of the Nurse give a reality to the piece, which, whatever French critics may pretend, is much more seriously disturbed by inconsistency of manners, than by breach of their dramatic unities. "God forbid," says Mr. Puff, in the *Critic*, "that in a free country all the fine words in the language should be engrossed by the higher characters of the piece." The French critics did not carry their ideas of equality quite so far ; but they tuned the notes of their subalterns just one pitch lower than those of their principal characters, so that their language, similar in style, but lower in sentiment and diction, presents still that subordinate resemblance and correspondence to that of their superiors, which the worsted lace upon the livery of a servant bears to the embroidery upon the coat of his master.

It is not to mere expression which these remarks are confined ; for if we consult the course of human nature, we shall find that mirth and sorrow, and events which cause both, are more nearly allied than perhaps it is altogether pleasing to allow. Considered relatively to a spectator, an incident may often excite a mingled emotion, partaking at once of that which is moving, and that which is ludicrous ; and there is no reader who has not, at some period of his life, met with events at which he hesitated whether to laugh or cry. It remains to be proved, why scenes of this dubious, yet interesting description, should be excluded from the legitimate Drama, while their force is acknowledged in that of human life. We acknowledge the difficulty of bringing them upon the scene with their full and corresponding effect. It was, perhaps, under this persuasion, that the Fool, whose wild jests were too much the result of habit and practice to be subdued even by the terrors

of the storm, has been banished from the terrific scene of King Lear. But, in yielding to this difficulty, the terrible contrast has been thus destroyed, in which Shakspeare exhibited the half-perceptions of the natural Fool, as contrasted with the assumed insanity of Edgar, and the real madness of the old King. They who prefer to this living variety of emotion the cold uniformity of a French scene of passion, must be numbered among those who read for the pleasure of criticism, and without hope of partaking the enthusiasm of the poet.

While we differ from the French criticism respecting the right to demand an accurate compliance with the unities, and decline to censure that casual intermixture of comic character which gives at once reality and variety to the Drama, we are no less disposed to condemn the impertinent love-scenes, which these authors have, as a matter of etiquette, introduced into all their tragedies, however alien from the passion on which they are grounded. The French Drama assumed its present form under the auspices of Louis XIV., who aimed at combining all the characters of a hero of romance. The same spirit which inspired the dull monotony of the endless *folies* of Scuderi and Calprenede, seemed to dictate to Corneille, and even to Racine, those scenes of frigid metaphysical passion which encumbered their best plays. We do not dispute the deep interest which attaches to the passion of love, so congenial to the human breast, when it forms the ground-work of the play ; but it is intolerably nauseous to find a dull love-tale mingled as an indispensable ingredient in every dramatic plot, however inconsistent with the rest of the piece. The *Amoureux* and *Amoureuse* of the piece come regularly forth to recite their commonplaces of gallantry, in language as cold as it is exaggerated, and as inconsistent with passion and feeling as with propriety and common sense. Even the horrid tale of Œdipus has the misplaced garnishment of a love intrigue between Thesius, brought there for no other purpose, and a certain Dircé, whom, in the midst of the pestilence, he thus gallantly compliments :

“ Quelque ravage affreux qu'étaie ici la peste,
L'absence aux vrais amans est encore plus funeste.”

The predominance of a passion which expresses itself so absurdly, is all that the French have condescended to adopt from the age of chivalry, so rich in more dramatic stores ; and they have borrowed it in all its pedantry, and without its tenderness and fire. Riccoboni has probably alleged the true reason for the introduction of these heavy scenes of love intrigue, which is, that at little expense of labour to the author, they fill up three quarters of the action of his play. We quote from the French version, as that immediately before us, and most generally intelligible :

“ Par exemple, ôtons de NICOMEDE les dix scènes de LAODICE ; de

L'ŒDIPÉ, les dix scènes de DIRCE ; de POLIEUCTE, les scènes d'amour de SEVERE ; de la PHÈDRE de Monsieur Racine, les six scènes d'ARICIE, —et nous verrons que non seulement l'action ne sera point interrompue, mais qu'elle en sera plus vive ; en sorte, que l'on verra manifestement, que ces scènes de tendresses n'ont servi qu'à ralentir l'action de la pièce, à la refroidir, et à rendre les héros moins grands. Si, après ces deux meilleurs Tragedies de la France, on examine tous les autres, on connoîtra bien mieux cette vérité. Lorsque l'amour fait le sujet de la tragédie, ce sentiment, si intéressant par lui-même, occupe la scène avec raison ; j'aime l'amour de PHÈDRE, mais de PHÈDRE seule."

Under this thralldom, the fetters of the French stage long laboured, notwithstanding the noble example of *Athalie*, the *chef-d'œuvre* of Racine. By the example of Voltaire, in one or two of his best pieces, they have of late ventured occasionally to discard their uninteresting Cupid, whose appearance on the stage as a matter of course and of ceremony, produced as little effect as when his altar and godhead are depicted on the semicircle of a fan.

We have already observed, that the refined, artificial and affected character of the French tragedy, arose from its immediate connexion with the pleasures and with the presence of an absolute sovereign. From the same circumstance, however, the French stage derived several advantages. A degree of discipline, unknown in other theatres, was early introduced among the French actors ; and those of a subordinate rank, who, on the English stage, sometimes exhibit intolerable, contemptuous, and wilful negligence, become compelled, on that of France, to pay the same attention to their parts as their superiors, and to exert what limited talents they possess in the subordinate parts to which they are adapted. The effect of this common diligence upon the scene, is a general harmony and correspondence in its parts, which never fails to strike a stranger with admiration.

The Royal protection, also, early produced on the Parisian stage an improved and splendid style of scenery, decoration, and accompaniments. The scenes and machinery which they borrowed from Italy, they improved with their usual alert ingenuity. They were still further improved under the auspices of Voltaire, who had the *sole* merit of introducing natural and correct costume. Before his time the actors, whether Romans or Scythians, appeared in the full dress of the French court ; and Augustus himself was represented in a huge full-bottomed wig, surmounted by a crown of laurel. The strict national costume introduced by Voltaire is now observed. The author has also the merit of excluding the idle crowd of courtiers and men of fashion, who thronged the stage during the time of representation, and formed a sort of semicircle round the actors, leaving them thus but a few yards of an area free for performance, and disconcerting at once the performers and the audience, by the whimsical intermixture of players

and spectators. The nerves of those pedants who contended most strenuously for the illusion of the scene, and who objected against its being interrupted by an occasional breach of the dramatic unities, do not appear to have suffered from the presence of this singular Chorus.

It was not decoration and splendour alone which the French stage owed to Louis XIV. Its principal obligation was for that patronage which called forth in its service the talents of Corneille and Racine, the Homer and Virgil of the French Drama. However constrained by pedantic rules ; however held back from using that infinite variety of materials, which national and individual character presented to them ; however frequently compelled by system to adopt a pompous, solemn, and declamatory style of dialogue—these distinguished authors still remain the proudest boast of the classical age of France, and a high honour to the European republic of letters. It seems probable that Corneille, if left to the exercise of his own judgment, would have approximated more to the romantic Drama. The *Cid* possesses many of the charms of that species of composition. In the character of Don Gourmas, he has drawn a national portrait of the Spanish nobility, for which very excellence he was subjected to the censure of the Academy, his national court of criticism. In a general point of view, he seems to have been ambitious of overawing his audience by a display of the proud, the severe, the ambitious, and the terrible. Tyrants and conquerors have never sat to a painter of greater skill ; and the romantic tone of feeling which he adopts in his more perfect characters is allied to that of chivalry. But Corneille was deficient in tenderness, in dramatic art, and in the power of moving the passions. His fame, too, was injured by the multiplicity of his efforts to extend it. Critics of his own nation have numbered about twenty of his Dramas, which have little to recommend them ; and no foreign reader is very likely to verify or refute the censure, since he must previously read them to an end.

Racine, who began to write when the classical fetters were clinched and riveted upon the French Drama, did not make that effort of struggling with his chains, which we observe in the elder dramatist ; he was strong where Corneille evinced weakness, and weak in the points where his predecessor showed vigour. Racine delineated the passion of love with truth, softness, and fidelity ; and his scenes of this sort form the strongest possible contrast with those in which he, as well as Corneille, sacrificed to the dull Cupid of metaphysical romance. In refinement and harmony of versification, Racine has hitherto been unequalled ; and his *Athalie* is, perhaps, likely to be generally acknowledged as the most finished production of the French Drama.

Subsequent dramatists, down to the time of Voltaire, were contented with imitating the works of these two great models ; until the active and ingenious spirit of that celebrated author seems tacitly to have

meditated farther experimental alterations than he thought it prudent to defend or to avow. His extreme vivacity and acute intellect were mingled, as is not unfrequent in such temperaments, with a certain nervous timidity, which prevented him from attempting open and bold innovation, even where he felt compliance with existing rules most inconvenient and dispiriting. He borrowed, therefore, liberally from Shakspeare, whose irregularities were the frequent object of his ridicule ; and he did not hesitate tacitly to infringe the dramatic unities in his plays, while in his criticism he holds them up as altogether inviolable. While he altered the costume of the stage, and brought it nearer to that of national truth, he made one or two irresolute steps towards the introduction of national character. If we were, indeed, to believe the admirers of Corneille, little remained to be done in this department ; he had already, it is said, taught his Romans to speak as Romans, and his Greeks as Greeks ; but of such national discrimination foreigners are unable to perceive a trace. His heroes, one and all, talk like men of no peculiar character or distinct age and nation ; but, like the other heroes of the French dramatic school, are “ all honourable men ;” who speak in high, grave, buskined rhymes, where an artificial brilliancy of language, richness of metaphor, and grandeur of sentiment, are substituted for that concise and energetic tone of dialogue, which shows at once the national and individual character of the personage who uses it. In *Mahomet*, *Alzire*, and one or two other pieces, Voltaire has attempted some discrimination of national character ; the ground-work, however, is still French ; and, under every disguise, whether of the turban of the Ottoman, the feathery crown of the savage, or the silk tunic of the Chinese, the character of that singular people can be easily recognised. Voltaire probably saw the deficiency of the national Drama with his usual acuteness ; but, like the ancient philosophers, he contentedly joined in the idolatry which he despised.

It seems, indeed, extremely doubtful, whether the French tragedy can ever be brought many steps nearer to nature. That nation is so unfortunate as to have no poetical language ; so that some degree of unnatural exaltation of sentiment is almost necessary to sustain the tone of tragedy at a pitch higher than that of ordinary life. The people are passionately fond of ridicule ; their authors are equally afraid of incurring it : they are aware, like their late ruler, that there is but one step betwixt the sublime and the ridiculous ; and they are afraid to aim at the former, lest their attempt, falling short, should expose them to derision. They cannot reckon on the mercy or enthusiasm of their audience ; and while they banish combats and deaths, and even violent action of any kind from the stage, this seems chiefly on account of the manifest risk, that a people more alive to the ludicrous than the lofty, might laugh when they should applaud. The drunken and dizzy fury with which Richard, as personated by Kean, continues to make

the motion of striking after he has lost his weapon, would be caviare to the Parisian parterre. Men must compound with their poets and actors, and pardon something like extravagance, on the score of enthusiasm. But if they are nationally dead to that enthusiasm, they resemble a deaf man listening to eloquence, who is more likely to be moved to laughter by the gestures of the orator, than to catch fire at his passionate declamation.

Above all, the French people are wedded to their own opinions. Each Parisian is, or supposes himself, master of the rules of the critical art; and whatever limitations it imposes on the author, the spectators receive some indemnification from the pleasure of sitting in judgment upon him. To require from a dancer to exhibit his agility without touching any of the lines of a diagram chalked on the floor, would deprive the performance of much ease, strength, and grace; but still the spectators of such a species of dance, might feel a certain interest in watching the dexterity with which the artist avoided treading on the interdicted limits, and a certain pride in detecting occasional infringements. In the same manner, the French critic obtains a triumph from watching the transgressions of the dramatic poet against the laws of Aristotle; equal, perhaps, to the more legitimate pleasure he might have derived from the unfettered exercise of his talents. Upon the whole, the French tragedy, though its regulations seem to us founded in pedantry, and its sentiments to belong to a state of false and artificial refinement, contains, nevertheless, passages of such perfect poetry and exquisite moral beauty, that to hear them declaimed with the art of Talma, cannot but afford a very high pitch of intellectual gratification.

The French comedy assumed a regular shape about the same period with the tragedy; and Molière was in his department what Corneille and Racine were in theirs; an original author, approached in excellence by none of those that succeeded him. The form which he assumed for a model was that of the comedy of Menander; and he has copied pretty closely some pieces from the Latin stage. Molière was endowed by nature with a rich fund of comic humour, which is nowhere more apparent than in those light pieces that are written upon the plan of the Italian masked comedy. In these he has introduced the jealous old Pantaloon; the knavish and mischievous Servant, and some of its other characters. In his regular comedy he soared to a higher pitch. Before his time the art had sought its resources in the multiplicity and bustle of intrigue, escape, and disguise,—or at best, in a comic dialogue, approaching to mere buffoonery. Molière's satire aimed at a nobler prey; he studied mankind for the purpose of attacking those follies of social life which are best exposed by ridicule. The aim of few satirists has been so legitimate, or pursued with such success. Female vanity, learned pedantry, unreasonable jealousy, the

floating and disgraceful passions of old men, avarice, coquetry, slander, the quacks who disgrace medicine, and the knaves who prostitute the profession of the law, were the marks at which his shafts were directed.

Molière's more regular comedies are limited by the law of unities, and finished with great diligence. It is true, the author found it sometimes necessary tacitly to elude the unity of place, which he durst not openly violate ; but, in general, he sacrifices probability to system. In the *Ecole des Femmes*, Arnolph brings his wife into the street, out of the room in which his jealousy has imprisoned her, in order to lecture her upon the circumspection due to her character ; which absurdity he is guilty of, that the scene may not be shifted from the open space before his door to her apartment. In general, however, it may be noticed, that the critical unities impose much less hardship upon the comic than upon the tragic poet. It is much more easy to reconcile the incidents of private life to the unities of time and place, than to compress within their limits the extensive and prolonged transactions which comprehend the revolution of kingdoms and the fate of monarchs. What influence, however, these rules do possess, must operate to cramp and embarrass the comic as well as the tragic writers ; to violate and disunite those very probabilities which they affect to maintain ; and to occasion a thousand real absurdities rather than grant a conventional license, which seems essential to the freedom of the Drama.

The later comic authors of France seem to have abandoned the track pointed out by Molière, as if in despair of approaching his excellence. Their comedy, compared with that of other nations, and of their great predecessor, is cramped, and tame, and limited. In this department, as in tragedy, the stage experienced the inconvenience arising from the influence of the Court. The varied and unbounded field of comic humour which the passions and peculiarities of the lower orders present, was prohibited, as containing subjects of exhibition too low and vulgar for a monarch and his courtiers ; and thus the natural, fresh, and varied character of comedy was flung aside, while the heartless vices and polished follies of the great world were substituted in its place. Schlegel has well observed, that the object of French comedy "is no longer life, but society ; that perpetual negotiation between conflicting vanities which never ends in a sincere treaty of peace. The embroidered dress, the hat under the arm, and the sword by the side, essentially belong to them ; and the whole of the characterisation is limited to the folly of the men and the coquetry of the women."

It is scarce in nature that a laughter-loving people should have remained satisfied with an amusement so dull and insipid as their regular comedy. A few years preceding the Revolution, and while the causes of that event were in full fermentation, the *Marriage of Figaro* ap-

peared on the stage. It is a comedy of intrigue; and the dialogue is blended with traits of general and political satire, as well as with a tone of licentiousness, which was till then a stranger to the French stage. It was received with a degree of enthusiastic and frantic popularity which nothing but its novelty could have occasioned, for there is little real merit in the composition. Frederick of Prussia, and other admirers of the old theatrical school, were greatly scandalized at so daring an innovation on the regular French comedy. The circumstances which followed have prevented Beaumarchais' example from being imitated; and the laughers have consoled themselves with inferior departments of the Drama. Accordingly we find the blank supplied by farces, comic operas, and dramatic varieties, in which plots of a light, flimsy, and grotesque character are borne out by the comic humour of the author and comic skill of the actor. Brunet, a comedian of extraordinary powers in this cast of interludes, has at times presumed so far upon his popularity as to season his farce with political allusions. It will scarce be believed that he aimed several shafts at Napoleon when in the height of his power. The boldness, as well as the wit of the actor, secured him the applause of the audience; and such a hold had Brunet of their affections, that an imprisonment of a few hours was the greatest punishment which Bonaparte ventured to inflict upon him. But whatever be the attachment shown to the art in general, the French, like ourselves, rest the character of their theatre chiefly upon the ancient specimens of the Drama: and the regular tragedy, as well as comedy, seems declining in that kingdom.

As the Drama of France was formed under the patronage of the monarch, and bears the strongest proofs of its courtly origin, that of England, which was encouraged by the people at large, retains equally unequivocal marks of its popular descent. Its history must naturally draw to some length, as being that part of our essay likely to be most interesting to the reader. In part, however, we have paved the way for it by the details common to the rise of dramatic art in the other nations of Europe. We shall distinguish the English Drama as divided into four periods, premising that this is merely a general and not a precise division. The taste which governed each period, and the examples on which it is grounded, will usually be found to have dawned in the period preceding that in which it was received and established.

- I. From the revival of the theatre until the great Civil War.
- II. From the Restoration to the reign of Queen Anne.
- III. From the earlier part of the last century down to the present reign.
- IV. The present state of the British Drama.

I. The Drama of England commenced, as we have already observed,

upon the Spanish model. *Ferrex and Porrex* was the first composition approaching to a regular tragedy; and it was acted before Queen Elizabeth, upon the 18th of January, 1561, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple. It partakes rather of the character of a historical than of a classical Drama; although more nearly allied to the latter class, than the chronicle plays which afterwards took possession of the stage. We have already recorded Sir Philip Sidney's commendation of this play, which he calls by the name of *Gorboduc*, from one of the principal characters. Acted by a learned body, and written in a great part by Lord Sackville, the principal author of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, the first of English tragedies assumed in some degree the honours of the learned buskin; but although a Chorus was presented according to the classical model, the play was free from the observance of the unities; and contains many irregularities severely condemned by the regular critics.

English comedy, considered as a regular composition, is said to have commenced with *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. This "right pithy, pleasant, and merry comedy," was the supposed composition of John Still, Master of Arts, and afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells. It was acted in Christ-Church College, Cambridge, 1575. It is a piece of low humour; the whole jest turning upon the loss and recovery of the needle with which Gammer Gurton was to repair the breeches of her man Hodge; but, in point of manners, it is a great curiosity, as the *curta suppellex* of our ancestors is scarcely anywhere so well described. The popular characters also, the Sturdy Beggar, the Clown, the Country Vicar, and the Shrew, of the sixteenth century, are drawn in colours taken from the life. The unity of time, place, and action, are observed through the play, with an accuracy of which France might be jealous. The time is a few hours—the place, the open square of the village before Gammer Gurton's door—the action, the loss of the needle—and this followed by the search for, and final recovery of that necessary implement, is intermixed with no other thwarting or subordinate interest, but is progressive from the commencement to the conclusion.

It is remarkable, that the earliest English tragedy and comedy are both works of considerable merit; that each partakes of the distinct character of its class; that the tragedy is without intermixture of comedy; the comedy without an intermixture of tragedy.

These models were followed by a variety of others, in which no such distinctions were observed. Numerous theatres sprung up in different parts of the metropolis, opened upon speculation by distinct troops of performers. Their number shows how much they interested public curiosity; for men never struggle for a share in a losing profession. They acted under licenses, which appear to have been granted for the purpose of police alone, not of exclusive privilege or monopoly; since London contained, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, no fewer

than fourteen distinct companies of players, with very considerable privileges and remunerations. See *Drake's Shakspeare and his Times*, volume ii., p. 205.

The public, therefore, in the widest sense of the word, was at once arbiter and patron of the Drama. The companies of players who traversed the country, might indeed assume the name of some peer or baron, for the sake of introduction or perfection ; but those of the metropolis do not, at this early period of our dramatic history, appear to have rested in any considerable degree upon learned or aristocratic privilege. The license was obtained from the crown, but their success depended upon the voice of the people ; and the pieces which they brought forward, were, of course, adapted to popular taste. It followed necessarily that histories and romantic Dramas were the favourites of the period. A general audience in an unlearned age requires rather amusement than conformity to rules, and is more displeased with a tiresome uniformity than shocked with the breach of all the unities. The players and dramatists, before the rise of Shakspeare, followed, of consequence, the taste of the public ; and dealt in the surprising, elevating, and often bombastic incidents of tragedy, as well as in the low humour and grotesque incidents of the comic scene. Where these singly were found to lack attraction, they mingled them together, and dashed their tragic plot with an under-intrigue of the lowest buffoonery, without any respect to taste or congruity.

The clown was no stranger to the stage ; he interfered, without ceremony, in the most heart-rending scenes, to the scandal of the more learned spectators.

" Now lest such frightful shows of fortune's fall,
And bloody tyrant's rage should chance appall
And death-struck audience, 'midst the silent rout,
Comes leaping in a self-misformed lout,
And laughs and grins, and frames his mimic face,
And jostles straight into the prince's place ;
Then doth the theatre echo all aloud,
With gladsome noise of that applauding crowd,
A goodly hotchpotch, where vile russetings
Are matched with monarchs and with mighty kings."

An ancient stage-trick, illustrative of the mixture of tragic and comic action in Shakspeare's time, was long preserved in the theatre. Henry IV. holding council before the battle of Shrewsbury, was always represented as seated on a drum ; and when he rose and came forward to address his nobles, the place was occupied by Falstaff ; a practical jest which seldom failed to produce a laugh from the galleries. The taste and judgment of the author himself were very different. During the whole scene, Falstaff gives only once, and under irresistible temptation, the rein of his petulant wit, and it is instantly checked by the

prince ; to whom, by the way, and not to the king, his words ought to be addressed.

The English stage might be considered equally without rule and without model when Shakspeare arose. The effect of the genius of an individual upon the taste of a nation is mighty ; but that genius, in its turn, is formed according to the opinions prevalent at the period when it comes into existence. Such was the case with Shakspeare. With an education more extensive, and a taste refined by the classical models, it is probable that he also, in admiration of the ancient Drama, might have mistaken the form for the essence, and subscribed to those rules which had produced such masterpieces of art. Fortunately for the full exertion of a genius as comprehensive and versatile as intense and powerful, Shakspeare had no access to any models of which the commanding merit might have controlled and limited his own exertions. He followed the path which a nameless crowd of obscure writers had trodden before him ; but he moved in it with the grace and majestic step of a being of a superior order ; and vindicated for ever the British theatre from a pedantic restriction to classical rule. Nothing went before Shakspeare which in any respect was fit to fix and stamp the character of a national Drama ; and certainly no one will succeed him capable of establishing, by mere authority, a form more restricted than that which Shakspeare used.

Such is the action of existing circumstances upon genius, and the re-action of genius upon future circumstances. Shakspeare and Corneille was each the leading spirit of his age ; and the difference between them is well marked by the editor of the latter :—“ *Corneille est inégal comme Shakspeare, et plein de genie comme lui ; mais le genie de Corneille étoit à celui de Shakspeare ce qu'un seigneur est à l'égard d'un homme de peuple né avec le même esprit que lui.*” This distinction is strictly accurate, and contains a compliment to the English author, which, assuredly, the critic did not intend to make. Corneille wrote as a courtier, circumscribed within the imaginary rules and ceremonies of a court, as a chicken is by circle of chalk drawn round it. Shakspeare, composing for the amusement of the public alone, had within his province, not only the inexhaustible field of actual life, but the whole ideal world of fancy and superstition ;—more favourable to the display of poetical genius than even existing realities. Under the circumstances of Corneille, Shakspeare must have been restricted to the same dull, regular, and unvaried system. He must have written, not according to the dictates of his own genius, but in conformity to the mandate of some *Intendant des menus plaisirs* ; or of some minister of state, who, like Cardinal Richelieu, thought he could write a tragedy because he could govern a kingdom. It is not equally clear to what height Corneille might have ascended, had he enjoyed the national immunities of Shakspeare. Each pitched down a land-mark in his

art. The circle of Shakspeare was so extended, that it is with advantage liable to many restrictions ; that of Corneille included a narrow limit, which his successors have deemed it unlawful to extend.

It is not our intention, within the narrow space to which our essay is necessarily limited, to enlarge upon the character and writings of Shakspeare. We can only notice his performances as events in the history of the theatre—of a gigantic character, indeed, so far as its dignity, elevation, and importance are considered ; but, in respect of the mere practice of the Drama, rather fixing and sanctioning, than altering or reforming, those rules and forms which he found already established. This we know for certain, that those historical plays or chronicles, in which Shakspeare's muse has thrown a never-fading light upon the history of his country, did, almost every one of them, exist before him in the rude shape of dry dialogue and pitiful buffoonery, stitched into scenes by the elder play-wrights of the stage. His romantic Dramas exhibit the same contempt of regularity which was manifested by Marlow, and other writers ; for where there was abuse or extreme license upon the stage, the example of Shakspeare may be often quoted as its sanction, never as tending to reform it. In these particulars the practice of our immortal bard was contrasted with that of Ben Jonson, a severe and somewhat pedantic scholar ; a man whose mind was coarse, though possessing both strength and elevation, and whose acute perception of comic humour was tainted with vulgarity.

Jonson's tragic strength consists in a sublime, and sometimes harsh, expression of moral sentiment ; but displays little of tumultuous and ardent passion, still less of tenderness or delicacy, although there are passages in which he seems adequate to expressing them. He laboured in the mine of the classics, but overloaded himself with the ore which he could not, or would not, refine. His *Cataline* and *Sejanus* are laboured translations from Cicero, Sallust, and Tacitus, which his own age did not endure, and which no succeeding generation will be probably much tempted to revive. With the stern superiority of learning over ignorance, he asserted himself a better judge of his own productions, than the public which condemned him, and haughtily claimed the laurel which the general suffrage often withheld ; but the world has as yet shown no disposition to reverse the opinion of their predecessors.

In comedy, Jonson made some efforts partaking of the character of the older comedy of the Grecians. In his *Tale of a Tub*, he follows the path of Aristophanes, and lets his wit run into buffoonery, that he might bring upon the stage Inigo Jones, his personal enemy. In *Cynthia's Revells*, and *The Staple of News*, we find him introducing the dull personification of abstract passions and qualities, and turning legitimate comedy into an allegorical mask. What interest can the reader have in such characters as the three Penny boys, and their

transactions with the Lady Pecunia? Some of Jonson's more legitimate comedies may be also taxed here with filthiness of language; of which disgusting attribute his works exhibit more instances than those of any English writer of eminence, excepting Swift. Let us, however, be just to a master-spirit of his age. The comic force of Jonson was strong, marked, and peculiar; and he excelled even Shakspeare himself in drawing that class of truly English characters, remarkable for peculiarity of *humour*;—that is, for some mode of thought, speech, and behaviour, superinduced upon the natural disposition, by profession, education, or fantastical affectation of singularity. In blazoning these forth with their natural attributes and appropriate language, Ben Jonson has never been excelled: and his works everywhere exhibit a consistent and manly moral, resulting naturally from the events of the scene.

It must also be remembered that, although it was Jonson's fate to be eclipsed by the superior genius, energy, and taste of Shakspeare, yet those advantages which enabled him to maintain an honourable though an unsuccessful struggle, were of high advantage to the Drama. Jonson was the first who showed, by example, the infinite superiority of a well-conceived plot, all the parts of which bore upon each other, and forwarded an interesting conclusion over a tissue of detached scenes, following without necessary connexion or increase of interest. The plot of *The Fox* is admirably conceived; and that of *The Alchymist*, though faulty in the conclusion, is nearly equal to it. In the two comedies of *Every Man in his Humour*, and *Every Man out of his Humour*, the plot deserves much less praise, and is deficient at once in interest and unity of action; but in that of *The Silent Woman*, nothing can exceed the art with which the circumstance upon which the conclusion turns is, until the very last scene, concealed from the knowledge of the reader, while he is tempted to suppose it constantly within his reach. In a word, Jonson is distinguished by his strength and stature, even in those days when there were giants in the land; and affords a model of a close, animated, and characteristic style of comedy, abounding in moral satire, and distinguished at once by force and art, which was afterwards more cultivated by English dramatists than the lighter, more wild, and more fanciful department in which Shakspeare moved, beyond the reach of emulation.

The general opinion of critics has assigned genius as the characteristic of Shakspeare, and art as the appropriate excellence of Jonson; not, surely, that Jonson was deficient in genius, but that art was the principal characteristic of his laborious scenes. We learn from his own confession, and from the panegyrics of his friends, as well as the taunts of his enemies, that he was a slow composer: The natural result of laborious care is jealousy of fame; for that which we do with labour, we value highly when achieved. Shakspeare, on the other

hand, appears to have composed rapidly and carelessly ; and, sometimes, even without considering, while writing the earlier acts, how the catastrophe was to be huddled up, in that which was to conclude the piece. We may fairly conclude him to have been indifferent about fame who would take so little pains to win it. Much, perhaps, might have been achieved by the union of these opposed qualities, and by blending the art of Jonson with the fiery invention and fluent expression of his great contemporary. But such a union of opposite excellences in the same author was hardly to be expected ; nor, perhaps, would the result have proved altogether so favourable as might at first view be conceived. We should have had more perfect specimens of the art ; but they must have been much fewer in number ; and posterity would certainly have been deprived of that rich luxuriance of dramatic excellences and poetic beauties, which, like wild-flowers upon a common field, lie scattered profusely among the unacted plays of Shakespeare.

Although incalculably superior to his contemporaries, Shakspeare had successful imitators, and the art of Jonson was not unrivalled. Massinger appears to have studied the works of both, with the intention of uniting their excellences. He knew the strength of plot ; and, although his plays are altogether irregular, yet he well understood the advantage of a strong and defined interest ; and in unravelling the intricacy of his intrigues, he often displays the management of a master. Art, therefore, not perhaps in its technical, but in its most valuable sense, was Massinger's as well as Jonson's ; and, in point of composition, many passages of his plays are not unworthy of Shakspeare. Were we to distinguish Massinger's peculiar excellence, we should name that first of dramatic attributes, a full conception of character, a strength in bringing out, and consistency in adhering to it. He does not, indeed, always introduce his personages to the audience, in their own proper character ; it dawns forth gradually in the progress of the piece, as in the hypocritical Luke, or in the heroic Marullo. But, upon looking back, we are always surprised and delighted to trace from the very beginning, intimations of what the personage is to prove, as the play advances. There is often a harshness of outline, however, in the characters of this dramatist, which prevents their approaching to the natural and easy portraits bequeathed us by Shakspeare.

Beaumont and Fletcher, men of remarkable talent, seemed to have followed Shakspeare's mode of composition, rather than Jonson's, and thus to have altogether neglected that art which Jonson taught, and which Massinger in some sort practised. They may, indeed, be rather said to have taken for their model the boundless license of the Spanish stage, from which many of their pieces are expressly and avowedly derived. The acts of their plays are so detached from each other, in substance and consistence, that the plot scarce can be said to hang

together at all, or to have, in any sense of the word, a beginning, progress, and conclusion. It seems as if the play began, because the curtain rose, and ended because it fell; the author, in the meantime, exerting his genius for the amusement of the spectators, pretty much in the same manner as in the *Scenario* of the Italians, by the actors filling up, with their extempore wit, the scenes chalked out for them. To compensate for this excess of irregularity, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher have still a high poetical value. If character be sometimes violated, probability discarded, and the interest of the plot neglected, the reader is, on the other hand, often gratified by the most beautiful description, the most tender and passionate dialogue; a display of brilliant wit and gaiety, or a feast of comic humour. These attributes had so much effect on the public, that, during the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, many of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays had possession of the stage, while those of Shakspeare were laid upon the shelf.

Shirley, Ford, Webster, Decker, and others, added performances to the early treasures of the English Drama, which abound with valuable passages. There never, probably, rushed into the lists of literary composition together, a band more distinguished for talent. If the early Drama be inartificial and unequal, no nation, at least, can show so many detached scenes, and even acts, of high poetical merit. One powerful cause seems to have produced an effect so marked and distinguished; to wit, the universal favour of a theatrical public, which daily and nightly thronged the numerous theatres then open in the city of London.

In considering this circumstance, it must above all be remembered, that these numerous audiences crowded, not to feast their eyes upon show and scenery, but to see and hear the literary production of the evening. The scenes which the stage exhibited, were probably of the most paltry description. Some rude helps to the imagination of the audience might be used by introducing the gate of a castle or town;—the monument of the Capulets, by sinking a trap-door, or by thrusting in a bed. The good-natured audience readily received these hints, with that conventional allowance, which Sir Philip Sidney had ridiculed, and which Shakspeare himself has alluded to, when he appeals from the poverty of theatrical representation to the excited imagination of his audience.

“Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O, the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest, in little space, a million:
And let us, ciphers to this great account,
On your imaginary forces work:
Suppose, within the girdle of these walls

Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
 Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
 The perilous, narrow ocean parts asunder ;
 Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
 Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
 Carry them here and there ; jumping o'er times
 Turning the accomplishment of many years
 Into an hour-glass."

Such are the allowances demanded by Shakspeare and his contemporaries from the public of their day, in consideration of the imperfect means and appliances of their theatrical machinery. Yet the deficiency of scenery and show, which, when existing in its utmost splendour, divides the interest of the piece in the mind of the ignorant, and rarely affords much pleasure to a spectator of taste, may have been rather an advantage to the infant Drama. The spectators, having nothing to withdraw their attention from the immediate business of the piece, give it their full and uninterrupted attention. And here it may not be premature to inquire into the characteristical difference between the audiences of the present day, and of those earlier theatrical ages, when the Drama boasted not only the names of Shakspeare, of Massinger, of Jonson, of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Shirley, of Ford ; but others of subordinate degree, the meanest of whom shows occasionally more fire than warms whole reams of modern plays. This will probably be found to rest on the varied and contrasted feelings with which the audience of ancient and that of modern days attend the progress of the scene.

Nothing, indeed, is more certain, than that the general cast of theatrical composition must receive its principal bent and colouring from the taste of the audience :

"The Drama's laws, the Drama's patrons give ;
 For those who live to please, must please to live."

But though this be an undeniable, and in some respects a melancholy truth, it is not less certain, that genius, labouring in behalf of the public, possesses the power of reaction, and of influencing, in its turn, that taste to which it is in some respects obliged to conform ; while, on the other hand, the play-wright, who aims only to catch the passing plaudit and the profit of a season, by addressing himself exclusively to the ruling predilections of the audience, degrades the public taste still farther, by the gross food which he ministers to it ; unless it shall be supposed that he may contribute involuntarily to rouse it from its degeneracy, by cramming it even to satiety and loathing. This action, therefore, and reaction of the taste of the age on dramatic writing, and *vice versa*, must both be kept in view, when treating of the difference betwixt the days of Shakspeare and our own.

Perhaps it is the leading distinction betwixt the ancient and modern

audiences, that the former came to listen, and to admire ; to fling the reins of their imaginations into the hands of the author and actors, and to be pleased, like the reader to whom Sterne longed to do homage, "they knew not why, and cared not wherefore." The novelty of dramatic entertainments (for there elapsed only about twenty years betwixt the date of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, accounted the earliest English play, and the rise of Shakspeare) must have had its natural effect upon the audience. The sun of Shakspeare arose almost without a single gleam of intervening twilight ; and it was no wonder that the audience, introduced to this enchanting and seductive art at once, under such an effulgence of excellence, should have been more disposed to wonder than to criticise ; to admire—or rather to adore—than to measure the height, or ascertain the course, of the luminary which diffused such glory around him. The great number of theatres in London, and the profusion of varied talent which was dedicated to this service, attest the eagerness of the public to enjoy the entertainments of the scene. The ruder amusements of the age lost their attractions ; and the royal bear-ward of Queen Elizabeth lodged a formal complaint at the feet of her majesty, that the play-houses had seduced the audience from the periodical bear-baitings ! This fact is worth a thousand conjectures ; and we can hardly doubt, that the converts, transported by their improving taste from the bear-garden to the theatre, must, generally speaking, have felt their rude minds subdued and led captive by the superior intelligence, which not only placed on the stage at pleasure all ranks, all ages, all tempers, all passions of mere humanity, but extended its powers beyond the bounds of time and space, and seemed to render visible to mortal eyes the secrets of the invisible world. We may, perhaps, form the best guess of the feelings of Shakspeare's contemporary audience, by recollecting the emotions of any rural friend of rough, but sound sense, and ardent feelings, whom we have had the good fortune to conduct to a theatre for the first time in his life. It may be well imagined, that such a spectator thinks little of the three dramatic unities, of which Aristotle says so little, and his commentators and followers talk so much ; and that the poet and the performers have that enviable influence over his imagination, which transports him from place to place at pleasure ; crowds years into the course of hours, and interests him in the business of each scene, however disconnected from the others. His eyes are riveted to the stage, his ears drink in the accents of the speaker, and he experiences in his mature age, what we have all felt in childhood—a sort of doubt whether the beings and business of the scene be real or fictitious. In this state of delightful fascination, Shakspeare and the gigantic dramatic champions of his age, found the British public at large ; and how they availed themselves of the advantages which so favourable a temper afforded them, their works will show so

long as the language of Britain continues to be read. It is true, that the enthusiastic glow of the public admiration, like the rays of a tropical sun darted upon a rich soil, called up in profusion weeds as well as flowers ; and that, spoiled in some degree by the indulgent acceptance which attended their efforts, even our most admired writers of Elizabeth's age not unfrequently exceeded the bounds of critical nicety, and even of common taste and decorum. But these eccentricities were atoned for by a thousand beauties, to which, fettered by the laws of the classic Drama, the authors would hardly have aspired, or, aspiring, would hardly have attained. All of us know and feel how much the exercise of our powers, especially those which rest on keen feelings and self-confidence, is dependent upon a favourable reception from those for whom they are put in action. Every one has observed how a cold brow can damp the brilliancy of wit, and fetter the flow of eloquence ; and how both are induced to send forth sallies corresponding in strength and fire, upon being received by the kindred enthusiasm of those whom they have addressed. And thus, if we owe to the indiscriminate admiration with which the Drama was at first received, the irregularities of the authors by whom it was practised, we also stand indebted to it, in all probability, for many of its beauties, which became of rare occurrence, when, by a natural, and indeed a necessary change, the satiated admiration began to give way to other feelings.

When a child is tired of playing with a new toy, its next delight is to examine how it is constructed ; and, in like manner, so soon as the first burst of public admiration is over with respect to any new mode of composition, the next impulse prompts us to analyze and to criticize what was at first the subject of vague and indiscriminate wonder. In the first instance, the toy is generally broken to pieces ; in the other, while the imagination of the authors is subjected to the rigid laws of criticism, the public generally lose in genius what they may gain in point of taste. The author who must calculate upon severe criticism, turns his thoughts more to avoid faults than to attain excellence ; as he who is afraid to stumble must avoid rapid motion. The same process takes place in all the fine arts : their first productions are distinguished by boldness and irregularity ; those which succeed by a better and more correct taste, but also by inferior and less original genius.

The original school founded by Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, continued by Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, Shirley, Ford, and others, whose compositions are distinguished by irregularity as well as genius, was closed by the breaking out of the great civil war in 1642. The stage had been the constant object of reprobation and abhorrence on the part of the Puritans, and its professors had no favour to expect at their hands if victorious. We read, therefore, with interest, but without surprise, that almost all the actors took up arms in behalf of

their old master King Charles, in whose service most of them perished. Robinson, a principal actor at the Blackfriars, was killed by Harrison in cold blood, and under the application of a text of Scripture,—“Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.” A few survivors endeavoured occasionally to practise their art in secrecy and obscurity, but were so frequently discovered, plundered, and stripped by the soldiers, that, “*Enter the red coat, Exit hat and cloak,*” was too frequent a stage direction. Sir William Davenant endeavoured to evade the severe zealots of the time, by representing a sort of opera, said to have been the first Drama in which moveable scenery was introduced upon the stage. Even the cavaliers of the more grave sort disapproved of the revival of these festive entertainments during the unstable and melancholy period of the interregnum. “I went,” says the excellent Evelyn, in his *Diary*, 5th May, 1658, “to see a new opera after the Italian way; in recitation, music, and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence; but it was prodigious that in such a time of public consternation, such a variety should be kept up or permitted, and being engaged with company, could not decently resist the going to see it, though my heart smote me for it.” Davenant’s theatrical enterprise, abhorred by the fanaticism of the one party, and ill adapted to the dejected circumstances of the other, was not probably very successful.

II. With royalty, the stage revived in England. But the theatres in the capital were limited to two, a restriction which has never since been extended. This was probably by the advice of Clarendon, who endeavoured, though vainly, to stem at all points the flood of idle gaiety and dissipation which broke in after the Restoration. The example of France might reconcile Charles to this exertion of royal authority. With this restoration of the Drama, as well as of the crown, commences the second part of English dramatic history.

Charles II. had been accustomed to enjoy the foreign stage during his exile, and had taste enough to relish its beauties. It is probable, however, that his judgment was formed upon the French model, for few of the historical or romantic Dramas were revived at the Restoration. So early as 26th of November, 1662, the *Diary* of Evelyn contains this entry: “I saw Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, played, but now the old plays began to disgust this refined age, since his Majesty has been so long abroad.” Dryden, Howard, and others, who obtained possession of the stage, introduced what was for some time called Heroic Plays, written in couplets, and turning upon the passions of love and honour. In the dialogue, these pieces resembled that of the French stage, where the actors declaim alternately in the best language, and in the finest thoughts, which the poet can supply; but without much trace of natural passion or propriety of character.

But though French in dialogue and sentiment, the heroic plays were English in noise and bustle, and the lack of truth and nature was supplied by trumpets and tempests, victories, and processions. An entertainment of a character so forced and unnatural, was obviously of foreign growth, and flowed from the court. Dryden himself has assured us, "that the favour which heroic plays had acquired upon the stage, was entirely owing to the countenance which they had received at court; and that the most eminent persons for wit and humour in the royal circle had so far honoured them, that they judged no way so fit as verse to entertain a noble audience, or express a noble passion." In these pieces the unities were not observed: but in place of the classical restrictions, there were introduced certain romantic whimsical limitations of the dramatic art, which, had they been adopted, must soon have destroyed all its powers of pleasing. The characters were avowedly formed upon the model of the French romance, where honour was a sort of insane gasconading extravagance, and who seem to have made a vow never to speak or think of anything but love; and that in language sometimes ingeniously metaphysical, sometimes puerile to silliness, sometimes mad even to raving, but always absurd, unnatural, and extravagant. In point of system it was stated, that a heroic play should be an imitation of a heroic poem. The laws of such compositions did not, it was said, dispense with those of the elder Drama but exalted them, and obliged the poet to draw all things as far above the ordinary proportion of the stage, as the stage itself is beyond the common words and actions of human life. The effects which a heroic play, constructed upon such an overstrained model, produced, is well described by Mrs. Evelyn, wife of the author of that name already quoted, in a letter to *Mr. Bohun*, written in 1671: "Since my last to you I have seen the *Siege of Grenada*, a play so full of ideas, that the most refined romance I ever read is not to compare with it. Love is made so pure, and valour so nice, that one would imagine it designed for a Utopia rather than our stage. I do not quarrel with the poet, but admire one born in the decline of morality should be able to feign such exact virtue; and as poetic fiction has been instructive in former ages, I wish this the same event in ours. As to the strict law of comedy I dare not pretend to judge. Some think the division of the story not so well as if it could all have been comprehended in the day of action. Truth of history, exactness of time, possibilities of adventures, are niceties which the ancient critics might require, but those who have outdone them in fine notions may be allowed the liberty to express them their own way, and the present world is so enlightened that the old dramatique must bear no sway. This account perhaps is not enough to do *Mr. Dryden* right, yet is as much as you can expect from the leisure of one who has the care of a nursery." (See Evelyn's *Works*.) This ingenious lady felt what, overawed by the fashion of

the moment, she has intimated rather than expressed : namely, that the Heroic Drama, notwithstanding the fine poetry of which it may be made the vehicle, was overstrained, fantastical, and unnatural.

In comedy, also, there was evinced, subsequent to the Restoration, a kindred desire of shining in dialogue, rather than attempting the humorous delineation of character of which Shakspeare, Jonson, and the earlier school, had set the example. The comic author no longer wrote to move the hearty laugh of a popular assembly, but to please a fashionable circle, "the men of wit and pleasure about town;" with whom wit and raillery is always more prevailing than humour. As in tragedy, therefore, the authors exhausted trope and figure, and reduced to logic the language of heroic passion ; so in comedy, a succession of smart jests, which never served to advance the action of the piece, or to display the character of the speaker, were bandied to and fro upon the stage.

Satire is the appropriate corrective of extravagance in composition, and *The Rehearsal* of the Duke of Buckingham, though it can scarcely be termed a work of uncommon power, had yet the effect of holding up to public ridicule, the marked and obvious absurdities of the revived Drama in both its branches. After the appearance of this satire, a taste too extravagant for long endurance was banished from the theatre ; both tragedy and comedy retraced their steps, and approached more nearly to the field of human action, passion, and suffering ; and down to the Revolution, a more natural style of Drama occupied the stage. It was supported by men of the highest genius ; who, but for one great leading error, might perhaps have succeeded in giving to the art its truest and most energetic character. The talents of Otway, in his scenes of passionate affection, rival, at least, and sometimes excel, those of Shakspeare. More tears have been shed, probably, for the sorrows of Belvidera and Monimia, than for those of Juliet and Desdemona. The introduction of actresses upon the stage was scarce known before the Restoration, and it furnished the poets of the latter period with appropriate representatives for their female characters. This more happy degree of personification, as it greatly increased the perfection of the scene, must have animated, in proportion, the genius of the author. A marked improvement, therefore, may be traced in love scenes, and, indeed, in all those wherein female characters are introduced ; that which was to be spoken by a fitting representative was, of course, written with more care, as it was acted with greater effect. This was an advantage, and a great one, possessed by the theatre succeeding the Restoration. Great dramatic force and vigour marked the dramatic compositions of this age. It was not indeed equal to those of Shakspeare, either in point of the talent called forth, or the quantity of original poetry given to the public ; but Otway, and even Lee, notwithstanding his bombastic rant, possessed considerable knowledge of

dramatic art and of stage-effect. Several plays of this period have kept possession of the stage ; less, perhaps, on account of intrinsic merits, than because some of the broad errors of the earlier age had been removed, and a little more art had been introduced in the combination of the scenes, and disentanglement of the plot. The voice of criticism was frequently heard ; the dramatic rules of the ancients were known and quoted ; and though not recognised in their full extent, had some influence in regulating the action of the Drama.

In one heinous article, however, the poets of this age sinned at once against virtue, good taste, and decorum ; and endangered, by the most profligate and shameless indecency, the cause of morality, which has been often considered as nearly allied with that of the legitimate Drama. In the first period of the British stage, the actors were men of decent character, and often acquired considerable independence. The women's parts were acted by boys. Hence, although there were too many instances of low and licentious dialogue, there were few of that abominable species which addresses itself not to the fancy, but to the passions ; and is seductive, instead of being ludicrous. Had Charles II. borrowed from the French monarchy the severe etiquette of their court, when he introduced into England something resembling the style of their plays, he would have asserted what was due to his own dignity, and the cause of sound morals and good manners, by prohibiting the vulgar and degrading license, which in itself was insulting to the presence of a king. It was, however, this prince's lot, in the regulation of his amusements, as well in his state government, to neglect self-respectability. In his exile, he had been "merry, scandalous, and poor ;" had been habituated to share familiarly coarse jests and loose pleasures with his dissolute companions ; and, unfortunately, he saw no reason for disusing the license to which he had accustomed himself, when it was equally destructive to his own character and to decorum. What had been merely coarse was, under his influence, rendered vicious and systematic impurity. Scenes, both passionate and humorous, were written in such a style, as if the author had studied, whether the grave seduction of the heroic, or the broad infamy of the comic scenes, should contain the grossest insult to public decency. The female performers were of a character proper to utter whatever ribaldry the poet chose to put into their mouths ; and, as they practised what they taught, the King himself, and the leading courtiers, formed connexions which gave the actresses a right to be saucy in their presence, and to reckon upon their countenance when practising in public the effrontery which marked their intercourse in private life. How much this shocked the real friends of Charles, is shown by its effects upon Evelyn, whose invaluable *Diary* we have already quoted :—"This night was acted my Lord Broghill's tragedy, called *Mustapha*, before their Majesties at court, at which I was present ; though very seldom now going to the public theatres, for many

reasons, as they are now abused to an atheistical liberty. Foul and indecent women now, and never till now, are permitted to appear and act, who, inflaming several young noblemen and gallants, became their misses and some their wives—witness the Earl of Oxford, Sir R. Howard, P. Rupert, the Earl of Dorset, and another greater person than any of them, who fell into their snares, to the reproach of their noble families, and ruin of both body and soul.” He elsewhere repeatedly expresses his grief and disgust at the pollution and degeneracy of the stage. (Evelyn’s *Works*, vol. i., p. 392.) In a letter to Lord Cornbury (son of the great Clarendon) he thus expresses himself :—“In the town of London, there are more wretched and indecent plays permitted than in all the world besides ;” and adds, shortly after, “If my Lord Chancellor would but be instrumental in reforming this one exorbitancy, it would gain both the King and his Lordship multitudes of blessings. You know, my Lord, that I (who have written plays, and am a scurvy poet, too, sometimes) am far from Puritanisme ; but I would have no reproach left our adversaries, in a theme which may so conveniently be reformed. Plays are now with us become a licentious exercise, and a vice, and neede severe censors, that should look as well to their morality, as to their lines and numbers.”—And, at the hazard of multiplying quotations, we cannot suppress the following,—1st March, 1671 :—“I walked with him (the King) through St. James’s Park, to the garden, where I both heard and saw a very familiar discourse betwixt — (i.e. the King) and Mrs. Nelly (Gwyn) as they called an impudent comedian, she looking out of her terrace at the top of the wall, and — (the King) standing in the green walk under it. I was heartily sorry at this scene.”

The foul stain, so justly censured by a judge so competent, and so moderate as Evelyn, was like that of the leprosy in the Levitical Law, which sunk into and pervaded the very walls of the mansion ; it became the leading characteristic of the English theatre, of its authors, and of its players. It was, however, especially in comedy that this vice was most manifest ; and, to say truth, were not the eyes of antiquaries, like the ears of confessors, free from being sullied by the impurities subjected to them, the comedies of this period, as well as the comic scenes introduced to relieve the tragedies, are fitter for a brothel, than for the library of a man of letters.

It is a pity that we are under the necessity of drawing the character of the Drama, at this age, from a feature so coarse and disgusting. Unquestionably, as the art in other respects made progress, it might, but for this circumstance, have reached an uncommon pitch of perfection. The comedies of Congreve contain, probably, more wit than was ever before embodied upon the stage ; each word was a jest, and yet so characteristic, that the repartee of the servant is distinguished from that of the master ; the jest of the coxcomb from that of the

humourist or fine gentleman of the piece. Had not Sheridan lived in our own time, we could not have conceived the possibility of rivalling the comedies of Congreve. This distinguished author understood the laws of composition, and combined his intrigue with an art unusual on the British stage. Nor was he without his rivals, even where his eminence was most acknowledged. Vanburgh and Farquhar, inferior to Congreve in real wit, and falling into the next period, were perhaps his equals in the composition of acting plays. Like other powerful stimulants, the use of wit has its bounds, which Congreve is supposed sometimes to have exceeded. His dialogue keeps the attention too much upon the stretch, and, however, delightful in the closet, fatigues the mind during the action. When you are perpetually conscious that you lose something by the slightest interruption of your attention, whether by accident or absence of mind, it is a state of excitement too vivid and too constant to be altogether pleasant; and we feel it possible, that we might sometimes wish to exchange a companion of such brilliant powers, for one who would afford us more repose and relaxation.

The light, lively, but somewhat more meagre dialogue of the later dramatists of the period, and of that which succeeded, was found sufficient to interest, yet was not so powerful as to fatigue, the audience. Vanburgh and Farquhar seem to have written more from the portraits of ordinary life; Congreve from the force of his own conception. The former, therefore, drew the characters of men and women as they found them; selected, united, and heightened for the purpose of effect; but without being enriched with any brilliancy foreign to their nature. But all the personages of Congreve have a glimpse of his own fire, and of his own acuteness. He could not entirely lay aside his quick powers of perception and reply, even when he painted a clown or a coxcomb; and all that can be objected, saving in a moral sense, to this great author, is, his having been too prodigal of his wit; a faculty used by most of his successors with rigid economy.

That personification of fantasy or whim, called characters of humour, which Ben Jonson introduced, was revived during this period. Shadwell, now an obscure name, endeavoured to found himself a reputation, by affecting to maintain the old school, and espousing the cause of Ben Jonson against Dryden and other innovators. But although there was considerable force of humour in some of his forgotten plays, it was Wycherly upon whom fell the burden of upholding the standard of the Jonsonian school. *The Plain Dealer* is, indeed, imitated from Molière; but the principal character has more the force of a real portrait, and is better contrasted with the perverse, bustling, masculine, pettifogging, and litigious character of Widow Blackacre, than Alceste is with any of the characters in *The Misanthrope*. The other plays of this author are marked by the same strong and forcible painting, which approaches more to the satire of Jonson, than to the

ease of Vanburgh, the gaiety of Farquhar, or the wit of Congreve. Joining, however, the various merits of these authors, as belonging to this period, they form a galaxy of comic talent, scarcely to be matched in any other age or country ; and which is only obscured by those foul and impure mists, which their pens, like the raven wings of Sycorax, had brushed from fen and bog.

Morals repeatedly insulted, long demanded an avenger ; and he arose in the person of Jeremy Collier. It is no disgrace to the memory of this virtuous and well-meaning man, that, to use the lawyer's phrase, he pleaded his cause too high ; summoned, unnecessarily, to his aid the artillery with which the Christian fathers had fulminated against the Heathen Drama ; and, pushing his arguments to extremity, directed it as well against the use as the abuse of the stage. Those who attempted to reply to him, availed themselves, indeed, of the weak parts of his arguments ; but upon the main points of impeachment, the poets stood self-convicted. Dryden made a manly and liberal submission, though not without some reflections upon the rudeness of his antagonist's attacks :

" I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly ; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly accused of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph ; if he be my friend, as I have given him no occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that, in many places, he has perverted my meaning by his glosses, and interpreted my words into blasphemy and bawdry, of which they were not guilty ; besides, that he is too much given to horseplay in his raillery, and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say, ' The zeal of God's house has eaten him up ; ' but I am sure, it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility."

Congreve, less prudent, made an angry and petulant defence, yet tacitly admitted the charge brought against him, by retrenching, in the future editions of his plays, passages of grossness and profaneness, which the restless antiquary still detects in the early copies. And, on the whole, Collier's satire was attended with such salutary effects, that men started at the mass of impudence and filth, which had been gradually accumulated in the theatre, during the last reigns ; and if the Augean stable was not sufficiently cleansed, the stream of public opinion was fairly directed against its conglomerated impurities. Since that period, indecency, that easy substitute for wit and pleasantry, has been gradually banished from the Drama, where the conversation is now (according to Sheridan) at least always moral, if not entertaining.

During the second period of the British Drama, great improvement was in point of art. The principles of dramatic composition were more completely understood, and the poets themselves had writ-

ten so much upon the subject, that, as Dryden somewhere complains, they had taught their audience the art of criticising their performances. They did not, however, so far surrender the liberties and immunities of their predecessors, as to receive laws from the French critics. The rules of the unities were no farther adopted by Otway, Congreve, and the writers of their time, than their immediate purpose admitted. It was allowed, on all hands, that unnecessary and gross irregularities were to be avoided, but no precise rule was adopted; poets argued upon the subject according to caprice, and acted according to convenience. Gross and palpable extensions of time, and frequent changes of place, were avoided; and, unless in tragi-comedies, authors studied to combine the intrigue of their play into one distinct and progressive action. The genius by which this art was supported, was neither so general nor so profuse as that which decorated the preceding period. It was enough, however, to support the honour of the Drama; and if the second period has produced fewer masterpieces of talent, it has exhibited more plays capable of being acted.

III. In the third period of dramatic history, the critics began to obtain an authority for which they had long struggled, and which might have proved fatal to the liberties of the stage. It is the great danger of criticism, when laying down abstract rules without reference to any example, that these regulations can only apply to the form, and never to the essence of the Drama. They may assume, that the plot must be formed on a certain model, but they cannot teach the spirit which is to animate its progress. They cannot show how a passion should be painted, but they can tell to a moment when the curtain should be dropped. The misfortune is, that, while treating of these subordinate considerations, critics exalt them to an undue importance, in their own minds and that of their scholars. What they carve out for their pupils is a mere dissection of a lifeless form; the genius which animated it escapes, as the principle of life glided from the scalpel of those anatomists who sought to detect it in the earlier days of that art. Rymer had, as early as 1688, discovered that our poetry of the last age was as rude as its architecture. "One cause thereof," he continues, "might be, that Aristotle's *Treatise of Poetry* has been so little studied amongst us; it was, perhaps, commented upon by all the great men in *Italy*, before we well knew (on this side of the Alps) that there was such a book in being." Accordingly, Rymer endeavours to establish what he calls the Rule of Reason over Fancy, in the contrivance and economy of a play. "Those who object to this subjugation," he observes, "are mere fanatics in poetry, and will never be saved by their good works." The species of reason, however, to which Rymer appeals, resembles, in its occult nature, that which lies hidden in the depths of the municipal law, and which is better known to the common

class of mankind under the name of Authority. Because Aristotle assigns Pity and Terror as the objects of tragedy, Rymer resumes the proposition, that no other source of passion can be legitimate. To this he adds some arbitrary rules, of which it would be difficult to discover the *rationale*. It was the opinion, we are told, of the ancients, "that Comedy (whose province was humour and ridiculous matter only) was to represent worse than the truth, History to describe the truth, but Tragedy was to invent things better than the truth. Like good painters, they must design their images like the life, but yet better and more beautiful than the life. The malefactor of tragedy must be a better sort of malefactor than those that live in the present age : For an obdurate, impudent, and impenitent, malefactor, can neither move compassion nor terror nor be of any imaginable use in tragedy." It would be difficult to account for these definitions upon any logical principle, and impossible for an admirer of the Drama to assent to a rule which would exclude from the stage Iago and Richard III. It is equally difficult to account for the *rationale* of the following dogmata : " If I mistake not, in poetry no woman is to kill a man, except her quality gives her the advantage above him ; nor is a servant to kill his master ; nor a private man, much less a subject, to kill a king, nor on the contrary. Poetical decency will not suffer death to be dealt to each other by such persons, whom the laws of duel allow not to enter the lists together." (Rymer's *View of the Tragedies of the Last Age*.) Though for these, and similar critical conceits, it would be difficult to find any just principle, nevertheless, Rymer, Dennis, and other critics, who, mixing observations founded on sound judgment and taste, and others which rested merely upon dauntless assertion, or upon the opinions of Aristotle, began thereby to extend their authority, and produce a more than salutary influence upon the Drama. It is true, that both of the aristarchs whom we have named were so ill-advised as themselves to attempt to write plays, and thereby most effectually proved, that it was possible for a Drama to be extremely regular, and at the same time, intolerably dull. Gradually, however, their precepts, in despite of their example, gained influence over the stage. They laid down rules in which the audience were taught to regard the trade of a connoisseur as easy and soon learned ; and the same quantity of technical jargon which, in the present day, constitutes a judge of painting was, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, sufficient to elevate a Templar into a dramatic critic. The court of criticism, though self-constituted, was sufficiently formidable, since they possessed the power of executing their own decrees. Many authors made their submission ; and, amongst others, Congreve humbled himself in the *Mourning Bride*, and Addison, with anxious and constitutional timidity, sacrificed to the unities in his celebrated tragedy of *Cato*. Being in form and essence rather a French than an English

play, it is one of the few English tragedies which foreigners have admired. It was translated into Italian, and admired as a perfect model by Riccoboni, although his taste condemns the silly love intrigue. Its success was contagious. Southerne and Rowe may be considered as belonging to the same school; although the former admired Shakspeare, and the latter formed himself, in some degree, on the model of Otway. Translations of French tragedies became every day more frequent; and their diction and style of dialogue was imitated upon the British stage. The language of tragedy no longer expressed human passion, or intimated what the persons of the Drama actually felt, but described and debated, alternately, what they ought to feel; and sounding sentences, and long similes, exhibiting an active fancy and a cold imagination, supplied the place of force and of pathos.

The line between comedy and tragedy was now strictly drawn. The latter was no longer permitted to show that strain of heroic humour which exhibits itself in the character of Falconbridge, Hotspur, and Henry V., as well as Mercutio. All was to be cold and solemn, and in the same key of dull, grave state. Neither was comedy relieved by the touches of pathetic tenderness, and even sublimity, which are to be found in the romantic plays of the earlier period. To compensate the audience for the want of this beautiful variety of passion and feeling, Southerne, as Otway had done before him, usually introduces a few scenes of an under-plot, containing the most wretched and indecent farce, which was so slightly and awkwardly dovetailed into the original tragedy, that they have since been cancelled as impertinent intrusions, without being so much as missed. Young, Thomson, and others, who followed the same wordy and declamatory system of composition, contributed rather to sink than to exalt the character of the stage. The two first were both men of excellent genius, as their other writings have sufficiently testified; but, as dramatists, they wrought upon a false model, and their productions are of little value.

It is a remarkable instance of the decay of dramatic art at this period, that several of the principal authors of the time felt themselves at liberty to write imitations of old plays belonging to the original school, by way of adapting them to the taste of their own age. *The Fair Penitent* of Rowe is well known as a poor imitation of Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*. It does not greatly excel the original in the management and conduct of the piece; and, in every thing else, falls as far beneath it as the baldest translation can sink below the most spirited original.

It would appear that the players of this period had adopted a mode of acting correspondent to the poetical taste of the time. Declamation seems to have been more in fashion in the school of Booth and Betterton than that vivacity of action which exhibits at once, with word, eye, and gesture, the immediate passion which it is the actor's part to

express. "I cannot help," says Cibber, "in regard to truth, remembering the rude and riotous havoc we made of all the late dramatic honours of the theatre ! all became at once the spoil of ignorance and self-conceit ! Shakspeare was defaced and tortured in every signal character ; *Hamlet* and *Othello* lost, in one hour, all their good sense, their dignity, and fame ; *Brutus* and *Cassius* became noisy blusterers, with bold unmeaning eyes, mistaken sentiments, and turgid elocution !" (Cibber's *Memoirs*.)

A singular attempt to deviate from the prevailing taste in tragedy was made by Lillo, with the highly laudable purpose of enlarging the dramatic utility. He conceived that plays founded upon incidents of private life, might carry more immediate conviction to the mind of the hearers, and be the means of stifling more vices in the bud, than those founded on the more remote and grander events of history. Accordingly, he formed his plots from domestic crimes, and his characters never rose above the ranks of middle life. Lillo had many requisites for a tragedian ; he understood, either from innate taste, or critical study, the advantage to be derived from a consistent fable ; and, in the tragedy of the *Fatal Curiosity*, he has left the model of a plot, in which, without the help of any exterior circumstances, a train of events operating upon the characters of the dramatic persons, produce a conclusion at once the most dramatic and the most horrible that the imagination can conceive. Neither does it appear that, as a poet, Lillo was at all inferior to others of his age. He possessed a beautiful fancy ; and much of his dialogue is as forcibly expressed as it is well conceived. On some occasions, however, he sinks below his subject ; and on others, he appears to be dragged down to the nether sphere in which it is laid, and to become cold and creeping, as if depressed with the consciousness that he was writing upon a mean subject. *George Barnwell* never rises above an idle and profligate apprentice ; Millwood's attractions are not beyond those of a very vulgar woman of the town ; Thoroughgood, as his name expresses, is very worthy and very tiresome ; and there is positively nothing to redeem the piece, excepting the interest arising from a tale of horror, and the supposed usefulness of the moral. The *Fatal Curiosity* is a play of a very different cast, and such as might have shaken the Grecian stage, even during the reign of terror. But the powers of the poet prove unequal to the concluding horrors of his scene. Old Wilmot's character, as the needy man who had known better days, exhibits a mind naturally good, but prepared for acting evil, even by the evil which he has himself suffered, and opens in a manner which excites the highest interest and expectation. But Lillo was unable to sustain the character to the close. After discovering himself to be the murderer of his son, the old man falls into the common cant of the theatre ; he talks about computing sands, increasing the noise of thunder, adding water to the sea,

and fire to Etna, by way of describing the excess of his horror and remorse ; and becomes as dully desperate, or as desperately dull, as any other despairing hero in the last scene of a fifth act.

During the third period of the Drama, Comedy underwent several changes. The department called genteel comedy, where the persons as well as the foibles ridiculed, were derived chiefly from high life, assumed a separate and distinct existence from that which ransacked human nature at large for its subject. Like the tragedy of the period, this particular species of comedy was borrowed from the French. It was pleasing to the higher classes, because it lay within their own immediate circle, and turned upon the topics of gallantry, persiflage, affectation, and raillery. It was agreeable to the general audience, who imagined they were thereby admitted into the presence of their betters, and enjoyed their amusement at their expense. The *Careless Husband* of Cibber, is, perhaps, the best English play on this model. The general fault to which they are all liable, is their tendency to lower the tone of moral feeling ; and to familiarize men, in the middling, with the cold, heartless, and selfish system of profligate gallantry practised among the higher ranks. We are inclined to believe, that in a moral point of view, genteel comedy, as it has been usually written, is more prejudicial to public morals than plays, the tendency of which seems at first more grossly vicious. It is not so probable that the *Beggar's Opera* has sent any one from the two shilling gallery to the highway, as that a youth entering upon the world, and hesitating between good and evil, may be determined to the worse course, by the gay and seductive example of *Lovemore* or *Sir Charles Easy*. At any rate, the tenderness with which vices are shaded off into foibles, familiarizes them to the mind of the hearer, and gives a false colouring to those crimes which should be placed before the mind in their native deformity. But the heaviness of this class of plays, and the difficulty of finding adequate representatives for those characters, which are really well drawn, are powerful antidotes to the evil which we complain of. That which is dully written, and awkwardly performed, will not find many imitators.

The genteel comedy, being a plant of foreign growth, never obtained exclusive possession of the English stage, any more than court dresses have been adopted in our private societies. The comedy of intrigue, borrowed, perhaps, originally from the Spaniards, continued to be written and acted with success. Many of Cibber's pieces, of *Centlivere's* and others, still retain their place on the stage. This is a species of comedy easily written, and seen with pleasure, though consisting chiefly of bustle and complicated incident ; and requiring much co-operation of the dress-maker, scene-painter, and carpenter. After all the bustle, however, of surprise, and disguise, and squabble ; after every trick is exhausted, and every stratagem played off, the writer too

often finds himself in a labyrinth, from which a natural mode of extrication seems altogether impossible. Hence the intrigue is huddled up at random ; and the persons of the Drama seem, as if by common consent, to abandon their dramatic character before throwing off their stage-dresses. The miser becomes generous ; the peevish cynic good-humoured ; the libertine virtuous ; the coquette is reformed ; the debauchee is reclaimed ; all vices natural and habitual are abandoned by those most habitually addicted to them :—a marvellous reformation, which is brought about entirely from the consideration that the play must now be concluded. It was when pressed by this difficulty, that Fielding is said to have damned all fifth acts.

The eighteenth century, besides genteel comedy, and comedy of intrigue, gave rise to a new species of dramatic amusement. The Italian Opera had been introduced into this country at a great expense, and to the prejudice, as it was supposed, of the legitimate Drama. Gay, in aiming at nothing beyond a parody of this fashionable entertainment, making it the vehicle of some political satire against Sir Robert Walpole's administration, unwittingly laid the foundation of the English Opera. The popularity of his piece was unequalled ; partly owing to its peculiar humour, partly to its novelty, partly to the success of the popular airs, which everybody heard with delight, and partly to political motives. The moral tendency of *The Beggar's Opera* has been much questioned ; although, in all probability, the number of highwaymen is not more increased by the example of Macheath, than that of murderers is diminished by the catastrophe of George Barnwell. Many years ago, however, an unhappy person, rather from a perverted and misplaced ambition, than from the usual motives of want and desperation, chose, though in easy circumstances, and most respectably connected, to place himself at the head of a band of thieves and housebreakers, whose depredations he directed and shared. On the night on which they committed the crime for which he suffered, and when they were equipped for the expedition, he sung to his accomplices the chorus of *The Beggar's Opera*,—"Let us take the road." But his confederates, professional thieves, and who pursued, from habit and education, the desperate practices which Mr. B—— adopted from an adventurous spirit of profligate Quixotry, knew nothing at all of Gay, or *The Beggar's Opera* ; and in their several confessions and testimonies, only remembered something of a *flash-song*, about "turning lead to gold." This curious circumstance, while it tends to show that the Drama may affect the weak part of a mind, predisposed to evil by a diseased imagination, proves the general truth of what Johnson asserts in *The Life of Gay*, that "highwaymen and housebreakers seldom mingle in any elegant diversions ; nor is it possible for any one to imagine, that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved on the stage."

This play is now chiefly remarkable, as having given rise to the English Opera. In this pleasing entertainment, it is understood that the plot may be light and the characters superficial, provided that the music be good, and adapted to the situation, the scenes lively and possessed of comic force. Notwithstanding the subordinate nature of this species of composition, it approaches, perhaps, more closely to the ancient Grecian Drama than any thing which retains possession of our stage. The subjects, indeed, are as totally different as the sublime from the light and the trivial. But, in the mixture of poetry and music, and in the frequent introduction of singing-characters unconnected with the business of the piece, and therefore somewhat allied to the Chorus, the English Opera has some general points of resemblance with the Grecian tragedy. This species of dramatic writing was successfully practised by Bickerstaff, and has been honoured by the labours of Sheridan.

IV. With the fourth era of our dramatic history commenced a return to a better taste, introduced by the celebrated David Garrick. The imitations of French tragedy, and the tiresome uniformity of genteel comedy, were ill adapted to the display of his inimitable talent. And thus, if the last generation reaped many hours of high enjoyment from the performances of this great actor, the present is indebted to him for having led back the public taste to the Dramas of Shakspeare.

The plays of this great author had been altogether forgotten, or so much marred and disguised by interpolations and alterations, that he seems to have arisen on the British stage with the dignity of an antique statue disencumbered from the rubbish in which it had been enveloped since the decay of the art.

But although Garrick showed the world how the characters of Shakspeare might be acted, and so far paved the way for a future regeneration of the stage, no kindred spirit arose to imitate his tone of composition. His supremacy was universally acknowledged; but it seemed as if he was regarded as an object of adoration, not of imitation; and that authors were as much interdicted the treading his tragic path, as the entering his magic circle. It was not sufficiently remembered that the faults of Shakspeare, or rather of his age, are those into which no modern dramatist is likely to fall; and that he learned his beauties in the school of nature, which is ever open to all who profess the fine arts. Shakspeare may, indeed, be inimitable, but there are inferior degrees of excellence, which talent and study cannot fail to attain; and the statuary were much to blame who, in despair of modelling a Venus like that of Phidias, should set himself to imitate a Chinese doll. Yet such was the conduct of the dramatists of Britain long after the supremacy of Shakspeare had been acknowledged. He reigned a Grecian prince over Persian slaves; and they who adored

him did not dare attempt to use his language. The tragic muse appeared to linger behind the taste of the age, and still used the constrained and mincing measure which she had been taught in the French school. Hughes, Cumberland, and other men of talent, appeared in her service ; but their model remained as imperfect as ever ; and it was not till our own time that any bold efforts were made to restore to tragedy that truth and passion, without which declamation is only rant and impertinence. Horace Walpole, however, showed what might be done by adopting a more manly and vigorous style of composition ; and Home displayed the success of a more natural current of passion. The former, choosing a theme not only totally unfit for representation, but from which the mind shrinks in private study, treated it as a man of genius, free from the trammels of habit and of pedantry. His characters in *The Mysterious Mother* do not belong to general classes, but have bold, true, and individual features ; and the language approaches that of the first age of the English Drama. The *Douglas* of Home is not recommended by his species of merit. In diction and character it does not rise above other productions of the period. But the interest turns upon a passion which finds a response in every bosom ; for those who are too old for love, and too young for ambition, are all alike awake to the warmth and purity of maternal and filial affection. The scene of the recognition of Douglas's birth possesses a power over the affections, which when supported by adequate representation, is scarce equalled in the circle of Drama. It is remarkable that the ingenious author was so partial to this theatrical situation, as to introduce it in several of his other tragedies.

The comedy of the fourth period is chiefly remarkable for exhibiting *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*. Critics prefer the latter ; while the general audience reap, perhaps, more pleasure from the former ; the pleasantry being of a more general cast, the incident more complicated and varied, and the whole plot more interesting. In both these plays, the gentlemanlike ease of Farquhar is united with the wit of Congreve. Indeed, the wit of Sheridan, though equally brilliant with that of his celebrated predecessor, flows so easily, and is so happily elicited by the tone of the dialogue, that in admiring its sparkles, we never once observe the stroke of the flint which produces them. Wit and pleasantry seemed to be the natural atmosphere of this extraordinary man, whose history was at once so brilliant and so melancholy. Goldsmith was, perhaps, in relation to Sheridan, what Vanburgh was to Congreve. His comedies turn on an extravagance of intrigue and disguise, and so far belong to the Spanish school. But the ease of his humorous dialogue, and the droll, yet true conception of the characters, made sufficient amends for an occasional stretch in point of probability. If all who draw on the spectators for indulgence, were equally prepared to compensate by a corresponding degree of pleasure, they

would have little occasion to complain. The elder Colman's *Jealous Wife*, and some of his smaller pieces, are worthy, and it is no ordinary compliment, of being placed beside these master-pieces. We dare not rank Cumberland so high, although two or three of his numerous efforts retain possession of the stage. *The Wheel of Fortune* was certainly one of the best acting plays of its time; but it was perhaps chiefly on account of the admirable representative which the principal character found in Mr. John Kemble.

The plays of Foote, the modern Aristophanes, who ventured, by his powers of mimicking the mind as well as the external habits, to bring living persons on the stage, belong to this period, and make a remarkable part of its dramatic history. But we need not dwell upon it. Foote was an unprincipled satirist; and while he affected to be the terror of vice and folly, was only anxious to extort forbearance-money from the timid, or to fill his theatre at the indiscriminate expense of friends and enemies, virtuous or vicious, who presented foibles capable of being turned into ridicule. It is a just punishment of this course of writing, that Foote's plays, though abounding in comic and humorous dialogue, have died with the parties whom he ridiculed. When they lost the zest of personality, their popularity, in spite of much intrinsic merit, fell into utter decay.

Meantime dramatic composition of the higher class seemed declining. Garrick, in our fathers' time, Mrs. Siddons in ours, could neither of them extract from their literary admirers any spark of congenial fire. No part written for either of these astonishing performers has survived the transient popularity which their talents could give to almost any thing. The truth seems to be, that the French model had been wrought upon till it was altogether worn out; and a new impulse from some other quarter—a fresh turning up of the soil, and awakening of its latent energies by a new mode of culture, was become absolutely necessary to the renovation of our dramatic literature. England was destined to receive this impulse from Germany, where literature was in the first luxuriant glow of vegetation, with all its crop of flowers and weeds rushing up together. There was good and evil in the importation derived from this superabundant source. But the evil was of a nature so contrary to that which had long palsied our dramatic literature, that, like the hot poison mingling with the cold, it may in the issue bring us nearer to a state of health.

The affectation of Frederick II. of Prussia, and of other German princes, for a time suppressed the native literature, and borrowed their men of letters from France, as well as their hair-dressers,—their Dramas as well as their dressed dishes. The continental courts, therefore, had no share in forming the national Drama. To the highest circle in every nation, that of France will be most acceptable, not only on account of its strict propriety and conformity to *les convenances*, but also as se-

curing them against the risk of hearing bold and offensive truths uttered in the presence of the sovereign and the subject. But the bold, frank, cordial, and rough character of the German people at large, did not relish the style of the French tragedies translated for their stage ; and this cannot be wondered at, when the wide difference between the nations is considered.

The national character of the Germans is diametrically opposite to that of the French. The latter are light, almost to frivolity, quick in seeing points of ridicule, slowly awakened to those of feeling. The Germans are of an abstracted, grave, and somewhat heavy temper ; less alive to the ridiculous, and more easily moved by an appeal to the passions. That which moves a Frenchman to laughter, affects a German with sorrow or indignation ; and in that which touches the German as a source of the sublime or pathetic, the quick-witted Frenchman sees only subject of laughter. In their theatres the Frenchman comes to judge, to exercise his critical faculties, and to apply the rules which he has learned, fundamentally or by rote, to the performance of the night. A German, on the contrary, expects to receive that violent excitation which is most pleasing to his imaginative and somewhat phlegmatic character. While the Frenchman judges of the form and shape of the play, the observance of the unities, and the *dénouement* of the plot, the German demands the powerful contrast of character and passion,—the sublime in tragedy and the grotesque in comedy. The former may be called the formalist of dramatic criticism, keeping his eye chiefly on its exterior shape and regular form ; the latter is the fanatic, who, disregarding forms, requires a deep and powerful tone of passion and of sentiment, and is often content to surrender his feelings to very inadequate motives.

From the different temper of the nations, the merits and faults of their national theatres became diametrically opposed to each other. The French author is obliged to confine himself, as we have already observed, within the circle long since described by Aristotle. He must attend to all the decorum of the scene, and conform to every regulation, whether rational or arbitrary, which has been entailed on the stage since the days of Corneille. He must never so far yield to feeling, as to lose sight of grace and dignity. He must never venture so far in quest of the sublime, as to run the risk of moving the risible faculties of an audience, so much alive to the ludicrous, that they will often find or make it in what is to others the source of the grand or the terrible. The Germans, on the contrary, have never subjected their poets to any arbitrary forms. The division of the empire into so many independent states, has prevented the ascendancy of any general system of criticism ; and their national literature was not much cultivated, until the time when such authority had become generally unpopular. Lessing had attacked the whole French theatrical system in his *Dramaturgie*, with

the most bitter raillery. Schiller brought forward his splendid Dramas of Romance and of History. Goëthe crowded the stage with the heroes of ancient German chivalry. No means of exciting emotion were condemned as irregular, providing emotion were actually excited. And there can be no doubt that the license thus given to the poet,—the willingness with which the audience submitted to the most extravagant postulates on their part, left them at liberty to exert the full efforts of their genius.

Lessing, Schiller, and Goëthe, became at once the fathers and the masters of the German theatre ; and it must be objected to these great men, that, in the abundance of their dramatic talent, they sometimes forget that their pieces, in order to be acted, must be adapted to the capabilities of a theatre ; and thus wrote plays altogether incapable of being represented. Their writings, although affording many high examples of poetry and passion, are marked with faults which the exaggeration of their followers has often carried into total extravagance. The plays of Chivalry and of History were followed by an inundation of imitations, in which, according to Schlegel, “there was nothing historical but the names and external circumstances ; nothing chivalrous but the helmets, bucklers, and swords ; and nothing of old German honesty but the supposed rudeness. The sentiments were as modern as they were vulgar ; from chivalry pieces, they were converted into cavalry plays, which certainly deserve to be acted by horses rather than men.”—(Schlegel on the Drama.)

It is not the extravagance of the apparatus alone, but exaggeration of character and sentiment, which have been justly ascribed as faults to the German school. The authors appear to have introduced too harshly brilliant lights and deep shadows ; the tumid is too often substituted for the sublime ; and faculties and dispositions the most opposed to each other, are sometimes described as existing in the same person.

In German comedy the same faults predominate to a greater degree. The pathetic comedy, which might be rather called domestic tragedy, became, unfortunately, very popular in Germany ; and found a champion in Kotzebue, who carried its conquests over all the continent. The most obvious fault of this species of composition is, the demoralizing falsehood of the pictures which it offers to us. The vicious are frequently presented as objects less of censure than of sympathy ; sometimes they are selected as objects of imitation and praise. There is an affectation of attributing noble and virtuous sentiments to the persons least qualified by habit or education to entertain them ; and of describing the higher and better educated classes as uniformly deficient in those feelings of liberality, generosity, and honour, which may be considered as proper to their situation in life. This contrast may be true in particular instances, and, being used sparingly, might afford a good moral lesson ;

But, in spite of truth and probability, it has been assumed, upon all occasions, by these authors, as the ground-work of a sort of intellectual jacobinism ; consisting, as Mr. Coleridge has well expressed it, “ in the confusion and subversion of the natural order of things, their causes, and their effects ; in the excitement of surprise, by representing the qualities of liberality, refined feeling, and a nice sense of honour in persons and in classes of life where experience teaches us least to expect them ; and in rewarding with all the sympathies that are the dues of virtue, those criminals, whom law, reason, and religion, have excommunicated from our esteem.”

The German taste was introduced upon the English theatre within these twenty years. But the better productions of her stage have never been made known to us ; for, by some unfortunate chance, the wretched pieces of Kotzebue have found a readier acceptance, or more willing translators, than the sublimity of Goëthe, the romantic strength of Schiller, or the deep tragic pathos of Lessing. They have tended, however (wretched as the model is,) to introduce on our stage a degree of sentiment, and awaken among the audience a strain of sensibility, to which before we were strangers.

George Colman's comedy of *John Bull* is by far the best effort of our late comic Drama. The scenes of broad humour are executed in the best possible taste ; and the whimsical, yet native characters, reflect the manners of real life. The sentimental parts, although one of them includes a finely wrought-up scene of paternal distress, partake of the *false* pathos of German pathos. But the piece is both humorous and affecting ; and we readily excuse its obvious imperfections, in consideration of its exciting our laughter and our tears.

While the British stage received a new impulse from a country whose literature had hitherto scarce been known to exist, she was enriched by productions of the richest native genius. A retired female, thinking and writing in solitude, presented to her countrymen the means of regaining the true and manly tone of national tragedy. She has traced its foundation to that strong instinctive and sympathetic curiosity, which tempts men to look into the bosoms of their fellow-creatures, and to seek, in the distresses or emotions of others the parallel of their own passions. She has built on the foundations which she laid bare, and illustrated her precepts by examples, which will long be an honour to the age in which they were produced, and admired ;—yet its disgrace, when it is considered that they have been barred their legitimate sphere of influence upon the public taste.

Besides this gifted person, the names of Coleridge, of Maturin, and other men of talents, throng upon our recollection ; and there is one who, to judge from the dramatic sketch he has given us in *Manfred*, must be considered as a match for Æschylus, even in his sublimest moods of horror. It is no part of our plan, however to enter upon the

criticism of our contemporaries. Suffice it to say, that the age has no reason to apprehend any decay of dramatic talent.

Neither can our actors be supposed inadequate to the representation of such pieces of dramatic art, as we judge our authors capable of producing. We have lost Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble, but we still possess Kean, Young, and Miss O'Neil; and the stage has to boast other tragic performers of merit. In comedy, perhaps, it was never more strong. In point of scenery and decoration, our theatres are so amply provided, that they may rather seem to exceed than to fall short of what is required to form a classical exhibition.

Where, then, are we to look for that unfortunate counterbalance, which confessedly depresses the national Drama in despite of the advantages we have enumerated? We apprehend it will be found in the monopoly possessed by two large establishments, which, unhappily for the progress of national taste, and, it is said, without any equivalent advantage to the proprietors, now enjoy the exclusive privilege of dramatic representation. It must be distinctly understood, that we attribute these disadvantages to the *system* itself, and by no means charge them upon those who have the administration of either theatre. The proprietors have a right to enjoy what the law invests in them: and the managers have probably discharged their duty to the public as honourably as circumstances would admit of; but the system has led into errors which affect public taste, and even public morals. We shall briefly consider it as it influences, *1st*, the mode of representation; *2dly*, the theatrical authors and performers; and *3dly*, the quality and composition of the audience.

The *first* inconvenience arises from the great size of the theatres, which has rendered them unfit for the legitimate purposes of the Drama. The persons of the performers are, in these huge circles, so much diminished, that nothing short of the mask and buskin could render them distinctly visible to the audience. Show and machinery have therefore usurped the place of tragic poetry; and the author is compelled to address himself to the eyes, not to the understanding or feelings of the spectators. This is of itself a gross error. Everything beyond correct costume and theatrical decorum is foreign to the legitimate purposes of the Drama, as tending to divide the attention of the audience; and the rivalry of the scene-painter and the carpenter cannot be very flattering to any author or actor of genius. Besides, all attempts at decoration, beyond what the decorum of the piece requires, must end in paltry puppet-show exhibition. The talents of the scene-painter and the mechanist cannot, owing to the very nature of the stage, make battles, sieges, &c., anything but objects of ridicule. Thus we have enlarged our theatres, so as to destroy the effect of acting, without carrying to any perfection that of pantomime and dumb show.

Secondly, The monopoly of the two large theatres has operated un-

favourably both upon theatrical writers and performers. The former have been, in many instances, if not absolutely excluded from the scene, yet deterred from approaching it, in the same manner as men avoid attempting to pass through a narrow wicket, which is perpetually thronged by an importunate crowd. Allowing the managers of these two theatres, judging in the first and in the last resort, to be possessed of the full discrimination necessary to a task so difficult—supposing them to be at all times alike free from partiality and from prejudice—still the number of plays thrust upon their hands must prevent their doing equal justice to all; and must frequently deter a man of real talents, either from pride or modesty, from entering a competition, clogged with delay, solicitation, and other circumstances, “*haud subeunda ingenio suo.*” It is unnecessary to add, that increasing the number of theatres, and diminishing their size, would naturally tend to excite a competition among the managers, whose interest it is to make experiments on the public taste; and that this would infallibly secure any piece, of reasonable promise, a fair opportunity of being represented. It is by such a competition that genius is discovered.

The exclusive privilege of the regular London theatres is equally, or in a greater degree, detrimental to the performer; for it is with difficulty that he fights his way to a London engagement, and when once received, he is too often retained for the mere purpose of being laid aside, or *shelved*, as it is technically called;—rendered, that is, a weekly burden upon the pay-list of the theatre, without being produced above four or five times in the season to exhibit his talents. Into this system the managers are forced from the necessity of their situation, which compels them to enlist in their service every performer who seems to possess buds of genius, although it ends in their being so crowded together that they have no room to blossom. In fact, many a man of talent thus brought from the active exercise of a profession, to be paid for remaining obscure and inactive in London, and supported by what seems little short of eleemosynary bounty, either becomes careless of his business or disgusted with it; and stagnates in that mediocrity to which want of exercise alone will often condemn natural genius.

Thirdly, and especially, the magnitude of these theatres has occasioned them to be destined to company so scandalous, that persons not very nice in their taste of society, must yet exclaim against the abuse as a national nuisance. We are aware of the impossibility of excluding a certain description of females from public places in a corrupted metropolis like London; but in theatres of moderate size, frequented by the better class, these unfortunate persons would feel themselves compelled to wear a mask at least of decency. In the present theatres of London, the best part of the house is openly and avowedly set off for their reception; and no part of it which is open to the public at large is free from their intrusion, or at least from the open dis-

play of the disgusting improprieties to which their neighbourhood gives rise. And these houses, raised at an immense expense, are so ingeniously misconstructed, that, in the private boxes, you see too little of the play, and, in the public boxes, greatly too much of a certain description of the company. No man of delicacy would wish the female part of his family to be exposed to such scenes; no man of sense would wish to put youth, of the male sex, in the way of such temptation. In London, if we would enjoy our most classical public amusement, we are braved by vice on the very threshold.

We notice these evils, without pretending to point out the remedy. If, however, it were possible so to arrange interests, that the patents of the present theatres should cover four, or even six, of smaller size, dedicated to the same purpose, we conceive that more good actors would be found, and more good plays written; and, as a necessary consequence, that good society would attend the theatre in sufficient numbers to enforce respect to decency. The access to the stage would be rendered easy to both authors and actors; and although this might give scope to some rant, and false taste, it could not fail to call forth much excellence, that must otherwise remain latent or repressed. The theatres would be relieved of the heavy expense at present incurred, in paying performers who do not play; and in each maintaining three theatrical corps, for the separate purposes of tragedy, comedy, and musical pieces; only one of which can be productive labourers on the same evening, though all must be supported and paid.

We might prove, that the drama is in itself as capable of being directed either to right or wrong purposes, as the art of printing. It is true that, even after a play has been formed upon the most virtuous model, the man who is engaged in the duties of religion will be better employed than he who is seated in a theatre, and listening to the performance.

When the necessity of daily labour is removed, and the call of social duty fulfilled, that of moderate and timely amusement claims its place, as a want inherent in our nature. To relieve this want, and fill up the mental vacancy, games are devised, books are written, music is composed, spectacles and plays are invented and exhibited. And if these last have a moral and virtuous tendency; if the sentiments expressed are calculated to rouse our love of what is noble, and our contempt of what is base or mean; if they unite hundreds in a sympathetic admiration of virtue, abhorrence of vice, or derision of folly; it will remain to be shown how far the spectator is more criminally engaged, than if he had passed the evening in the idle gossip of society; in the feverish pursuits of ambition; or in the unsated and insatiable struggle after gain—the graver employments of the present life, but equally unconnected with our existence hereafter.

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